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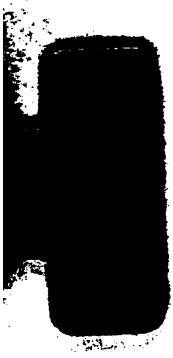

Alex P Stevenson
July 29/1904.

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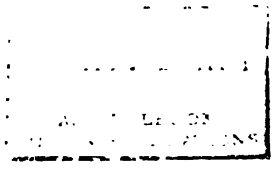
MRS. LYNN LINTON

HER LIFE, LETTERS, AND OPINIONS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF CHARLES KEENE OF "PUNCH"
TENNYSON AND HIS PRE-RAPHAELITE ILLUSTRATORS
GEORGE CRUIKSHANK'S PORTRAITS OF HIMSELF
HIS GOLF-MADNESS, AND OTHER QUEER STORIES
SOCIETY STRAWS



MRS. LYNN LINTON

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MRS. LYNN LINTON

HER LIFE, LETTERS, AND OPINIONS

BY

GEORGE SOMES LAYARD

9170

WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS

METHUEN & CO.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
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1901

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TO

MY FRIEND OF TWENTY YEARS

WILLOUGHBY HYETT DICKINSON

I AM PROUD TO

DEDICATE

THIS BOOK

"We may be sure (although we know not why) that we live our lives, like coral insects, to build up insensibly, in the twilight of the seas of time, the reef of righteousness. And we may be sure (although we see not how) it is a thing worth doing." R. L. STEVENSON

PREFACE

IN 1885, Mrs. Lynn Linton published what was to her friends the most interesting of all her works. Therein, under the guise of the *Autobiography of Christopher Kirkland*, she gave a sufficiently candid account of the first threescore years of her own somewhat chequered career.

Unfortunately for the success of the book, it was published as a three-volume novel, and, as such, miscarried. Written though it was with heart's blood, it failed to convince those who would have revelled in an avowed "Confession."

It treated largely, as was inevitable, of persons with whom Mrs. Linton had been brought into contact, and in an unfortunate moment she conceived the idea of reversing her own sex and that of many of her characters for their better disguise. To those who could read between the lines the effect was somewhat bizarre, while to those not in the secret the story was in parts incomprehensible. Thus the book enjoyed a lesser vogue than any of her three-volume novels, and never reached a second edition. And yet it is a human document of real importance and engrossing interest.

In a list of her works drawn out for a friend, Mrs. Linton inserted against *Christopher Kirkland* the words which Goethe had made famous, "Wahrheit und Dichtung," and to Miss Bird in after life she wrote of it—

"It was an outpour no one hears me make by word of mouth, a confession of sorrow, suffering, trial, and determination not to be beaten, which few suspect as the underlying truth of my life."

And, read as the story of a soul, it is surely worthy to rank with the most touching of self-revelations ever given to the world.

To me, as Mrs. Linton's biographer, the failure of the

book has, of course, proved an unmixed advantage. Had it obtained anything like a fair measure of success, I should have been in two minds as to the extent to which it should be used in the following pages. As it is, I have not hesitated —indeed, I have felt it obligatory—to make copious extracts, dotting the i's and crossing the t's where necessary. Nor have I scrupled to readjust names and sexes in such quotations as have been made, for the constant pulling-up of the reader by a bracketed (he) here or a bracketed (she) there would have proved both tiresome and offensive. No efforts have been spared to test the accuracy of all facts which have been thus conveyed. Particularly was I fortunate in obtaining the co-operation of Mrs. Gedge, Mrs. Linton's dearly-loved sister, who is since deceased.

If any there chance to be who put down this book with a desire to know more of its subject, I would recommend them to obtain a copy of *Christopher Kirkland* itself, and read the three volumes from beginning to end.

I would take this opportunity of tendering my hearty thanks to Miss Ada Gedge for the untiring and ungrudging help which she has given me in the preparation of this book; to the owners of the copyright of *Christopher Kirkland* for their kindness in allowing me to make copious extracts from that work; to Mrs. Hartley, Miss Beatrice Harraden, Mrs. Berridge, Mrs. W. K. Clifford, Mrs. Campbell Praed, Mrs. Alec Tweedie, Miss Amy Murray, Miss Bird, Lady Priestley, Lady Wardle, Sir Harry Johnston, Canon Rawnsley, Dr. Richard Garnett, Mr. Harry Orrinsmith, Mr. Sargent, Mr. Sidney Low, Mr. Mackenzie Bell, Mr. W. E. Adams, Mr. A. W. Benn, Major Brickmann, Mr. J. F. Fuller, Mr. Sinnett, Mr. Rider Haggard, Mr. John Stafford, and Dr. Kiallmark, for their valuable notes; to Mr. Herbert Spencer and others, for allowing me to print their letters; to my friends Mr. H. A. Acworth and Mr. H. W. Smith, for their kindness in reading my manuscript; to Miss Hogarth, for permission to print the letters of Charles Dickens; and last, but not least, to my wife, my best and most relentless critic, to whom this work should have been dedicated had I been allowed to have my way.

G. S. L.

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THE LIFE OF
MRS. LYNN LINTON

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS

ELIZABETH LYNN (best known to the world as Mrs. Lynn Linton) was born at Crosthwaite Vicarage, in the parish of Crosthwaite, Cumberland, on the 10th day of February 1822.

Her paternal grandfather was a cadet of the Lynns of Norfolk, to whom lands were granted in the parish of Sparham by James I. As a lad of eighteen he ran away from home and enlisted in the Blues. He eventually obtained his commission, and served with distinction in the Seven Years' War.[1]

By his wife, a descendant of Sir John Narborough (a distinguished naval officer, also of Norfolk origin), he had issue James Lynn (born 17th September 1776), the father of the subject of this memoir.

Educated at the Grammar School, Rochester, James Lynn proceeded to Wadham College, Oxford, took his degree, and was ordained to the curacy of Horsham, Sussex. Thence he became successively curate of the Parish Church, Maidstone, and minor canon of Rochester. In addition to this last appointment, he held the offices of chaplain to the garrison

[1] *À propos* of their Norfolk origin, Mrs. Linton remembered her father saying that if he or his had their rights, half Norwich would have been theirs.

at Chatham and to the Argonaut Hospital Ship. In 1804 he was appointed to the perpetual curacy of Strood, Kent, and in 1811 combined with it the perpetual curacy of Sebergham[1]

Six years before this (1805), Mr. Lynn had married Charlotte Alicia, daughter of Samuel Goodenough, then Dean of Rochester, and afterwards Bishop of Carlisle.

In 1814 he resigned the curacy of Strood, and was appointed by his father-in-law to the rectory of Caldbeck in Cumberland. In 1820 he became, in addition, Vicar of Crosthwaite[2] and chaplain to the bishop. Thus ended his clerical migrations.

Whilst at Strood he purchased the Gadshill property (afterwards famous as the residence of Charles Dickens). This he retained until his death on 1st February 1855, at the age of seventy-eight.

So much for Eliza Lynn's paternal origin. Her maternal grandfather was, as has been said, Samuel Goodenough, Bishop of Carlisle. Amongst other offices he held that of Botanist to Queen Charlotte, a fact from which the students of heredity will doubtless trace the passionate devotion of his granddaughter to what was to prove one of her lifelong hobbies. It was of him that the following well-known punning couplet was written:—

> "'Twas well enough that Goodenough before the lords should preach,
> For sure enough they're bad enough for Goodenough to teach."

Miss Goodenough was little more than a child when the young minor canon of Rochester Cathedral, the Rev. James Lynn, determined to make her his wife. The young couple began their housekeeping in the January of 1805, the year after Mr. Lynn's appointment to Strood. Then followed seventeen years of married life, and twelve children were in

[1] It may be mentioned as a curious coincidence, that in going over the Parish Register for his work, *The History of Strood*, Mr. Henry Smetham came across the following entry: "Eliza Lynn was buried the 30th day of October, 1577."

[2] To avoid confusion later on, it should here be stated that the town of Keswick was part of the parish of Crosthwaite, and the two names are often used interchangeably.

due course born, of whom Eliza, as the subject of this memoir was always called, was the last. Mrs. Lynn survived the birth of her youngest daughter only a few months.

Thus we have it that Eliza's was practically a motherless childhood (a circumstance, as we shall see, of the first importance), for although Mr. Lynn married a second time, this was not until his family was grown up, and his youngest daughter was out in the world. His second wife was Miss Elizabeth Coare, who died childless, 17th April 1848.

The names of the children of James and Alicia Lynn will be found in Appendix A.

So much for the bare outlines of Elizabeth Lynn's origin. We will now proceed to the far more important consideration of the circumstances and influences by which she was surrounded on her appearance upon what was to prove a scene of vast experience and striking vicissitudes.

Vicar Lynn, as in the Cumberland fashion he was generally called, was, at the time of his youngest daughter's birth, forty-six years of age. Before half a year was out he found himself, as we have seen, a widower, with twelve children, ranging from the eldest son of sixteen to the baby daughter of five months.

Of him at this terrible crisis in his life, his daughter wrote sixty years later—

"My poor dear father! The loss of my beautiful mother, and, a year after her death, that of the eldest girl, who seems to have been one of those sweet mother-sisters sometimes found as the eldest of the family, had tried him almost beyond his strength. His life henceforth was a mingled web of passion and tears—now irritated and now despairing—with ever that pathetic prostration at the foot of the Cross, where he sought to lay down his burden of sorrow and to take up instead resignation to the will of God—where he sought the peace he never found! He had lost the best out of his life, and he could not fill up the gap with what remained."

To the heavily stricken man, the task that lay before him

of rearing his children might well appear hopeless, and though he set to work with a strong determination to do his duty by them, it practically came in the end to his finding anything like individual superintendence, for which nature had by no means fitted him, quite beyond his powers. As Mrs. Linton wrote—

"One of our family traditions, rounded off, of course, by repetition and the natural desire to make a good story, tells how that, after our mother's death, my grandfather sent for my father and urged him to do such and such things, whereby he might increase his income and provide for the fitting conduct of his family. To each proposal my father found insuperable objections. At last the bishop, losing patience, said angrily—

"'In the name of heaven, Mr. Lynn, what do you mean to do for your children?'

"'Sit in the study, my lord, smoke my pipe, and commit them to the care of Providence,' was my father's calm reply.

"And he acted on his decision. He did emphatically commit us to the care of Providence, and he was satisfied with his trustee."

This, no doubt, as Mrs. Linton says, has gained in the telling. At the same time, in effect it was true. Passionately attached to his children, as those who are alive can testify, often performing for them even womanly offices when they were young and sick, it is surely not surprising that, as they grew older, this sensitive and sorrow-laden man, "easily won and easily wounded," scholar and lover of books as he was, should lose touch with them, and leave his increasingly difficult task to the Providence in whom he trusted.

No one but an enthusiast could have contemplated with equal mind the task of being father and mother in one to the twelve children ranging from the ages of sixteen to one year, and no one but a genius could have grappled personally with the problem of their education. Even Mrs. Linton herself, writing with the natural resentment of one who felt that she had lost so much by a lack of the advantages with which others of like social standing in those days were usually

blessed, makes but a poor case against her father on this score. Not that it must be supposed for an instant that she did not cherish his memory, and, as occasion offered, speak of him with loyalty, pride, and affection, but she felt it due to herself that the truth concerning the disabilities under which she had laboured in early life should be clearly set forth.

Here is what she wrote regarding this matter—

"There was one thing I have never understood: why my father, so well read and even learned in his own person, did not care to give his children the education proper to their birth and his own standing. The elders among us came off best, for the mother had had her hand on them, and the bishop too had had his say; but the younger ones were lamentably neglected. I do not know why. We were not poor. Certainly, we were a large tribe to provide for, and my father often made a 'poor mouth'; but his income was good, the cost of living was relatively small, and things might have been better than they were. At the worst, my father might have taught us himself. He was a good classic and a sound historian; and though his mathematics did not go very deep, they were better than our ignorance. But he was both too impatient and too indolent to be able to teach, and I doubt if the experiment would have answered had he tried it."

By which it is clear that she practically endorses her father's inaction, and justifies the self-distrust which led him to forego the rôle of pedagogue to his boys,[1] whilst as regards the girls, it must be remembered that he was one of the large majority in those days who had a strong prejudice against intellectual pursuits for women, and could not away with the learned lady of the period. He held to the old-fashioned ideal of "Marthas for workadays and Marys for Sundays."

The following deliberate description of her father as she remembered him will not be without interest:—

"Naturally indolent and self-indulgent in his habits, but

[1] Eventually all the sons except Samuel, who went to sea, and Edmund, who died young, were sent to college.

a man of the strictest temperance—never once in his whole life, in that drinking age, having exceeded the bounds of absolute sobriety; fond of shining in society, where he knew how to make his mark, but almost impossible to drag out of his study for any form of social intercourse; flattered by the notice of the great when it came to him, but neglecting all his opportunities, and too proud to accept patronage even when offered; a Tory in politics and a Democrat in action; defying his diocesan and believing in his divine ordination; contemptuous of the people as a political factor, but kind and familiar in personal intercourse with the poor; clever, well read, and somewhat vain of his knowledge, but void of ambition and indifferent to the name in literature which he might undoubtedly have won with a little industry; not liberal as a home provider, but largely and unostentatiously generous in the parish; fond like a woman of his children when infants, but unable to reconcile himself to the needs of their adolescence, and refusing to recognise the rights of their maturity; thinking it derogatory to his parental dignity to discuss any matter whatsoever rationally with his sons, and believing in the awful power of a father's curse, yet caressing in manner and playful in speech even when he was an old man and we were no longer young; with a heart of gold and a temper of fire—my father was a man of strangely complex character, not to be dismissed in a couple of phrases.

"With a nature tossed and traversed by passion, and a conscience that tortured him when his besetting sin had conquered his better resolve once more, as so often before, he was in some things like David, for whose character he had the most intimate kind of personal sympathy. 'For I acknowledge my faults, and my sin is ever before me,' was the broken chord of his lament. But to us children, the echo of his loud midnight prayers, waking us from our sleep and breaking the solemn stillness of the night—the sound of his passionate weeping, mingled in sobbing unison with the moaning of the wind in the trees, or striking up in sharp accord with the stinging hail against the windows—gave only

an awful kind of mystery to his character, making the deeper shadows we knew too well all the more terrible by these lurid lights of tragic piety."

Such was Mrs. Linton's remembrance of her father, and probably, though almost cruel in its unhesitating dissection, it is as near the truth as we are likely to get. At the same time it cannot be too often insisted upon that descriptions of matters largely conjectural—as for example the reading of character must always be—should be accepted with due reserve. We must remember that when Mrs. Linton wrote her veiled autobiography she had behind her forty years of training in romance, and that although the facts are true enough, yet the novelist is apt to lose his sense of proportion and to allow his dramatic instinct to run riot. He is, in particular, apt to ignore the fact that cataracts and rapids only break up the still waters of life's stream here and there and at long intervals. He has trained himself to summarise and foreshorten, and he epitomises a league on a square inch of canvas. The point of view is of such supreme importance, and the character of the artist so creeps into his work. Readers of *The Egoist* will remember how the same scenes described by Sir Willoughby Patterne and Vernon Whitford travelling together in America so contrasted that they "might have been sketched in different hemispheres."

So it is that other available sources should also be drawn upon. From these we gather that Mr. Lynn was consistent in his life, uncompromising in action, and a man faithful to his creed. He was a staunch Churchman, impatient of extreme or party views, and unhesitatingly Tory in politics. He was passionately attached to his motherless little ones, and at his death his nine children who survived knew that they had lost a friend as well as a parent. "He was a man of far superior culture to most of the neighbouring clergy, and in his own person was better society for his children than they found elsewhere."

From such scraps of information we can at any rate picture, but faintly it may be, what manner of man was Eliza Lynn's father, under whose roof and jurisdiction she

was destined to spend the first twenty-three years of her life.

We will now try to gain some idea of the social conditions which surrounded her childhood.

At the time of her birth, Mr. Lynn, as we have seen, held the Rectory of Caldbeck and the Vicarage of Crosthwaite in the county of Cumberland. He also possessed the small property of Gadshill near Rochester.

During these early years the Lynns lived, now at one, now at another of these three houses. The exact dates of their several migrations are unimportant: all that need be said is that it was at Crosthwaite that Eliza was born; that she was eleven years of age when they went for a long stay to Gadshill, from about 1833 to 1838, Mr. Lynn having obtained leave of absence for the sake of his health; that they then returned to Caldbeck Rectory, and by 1842 were again at the Vicarage of Crosthwaite.

Of Caldbeck, the "Braeghyll" of *Christopher Kirkland*, the following particulars may be gathered:—

The three hundred inhabitants of the large, sparsely populated parish were half savages. There was no school. As a make-weight, there was a public-house or jerry-shop for every eighteen of the population. "The man who did not get drunk would have been the black swan which the white ones would have soon pecked to death. . . . Not a man would have held himself justified in marrying before the woman had proved her capacity for becoming a mother." The Saturday night fights were as much a matter of course as the Sunday morning shaves, and to these fights the priest of a neighbouring parish came more punctually than he went to his own chapel the next day. Nor did he come as spectator. He "stripped to the buff," took his turn like a man, and got drunk with the best.

With these abuses Mr. Lynn endeavoured to cope, but with little success. His wife, who was sweet and gentle and beautiful, had her hands too full, with ever a child in the cradle and another at the breast, to supplement his efforts in the parish with mothers' meetings, Bible-classes, and suchlike.

MRS. JAMES LYNN

(MRS. LYNN LINTON'S MOTHER)

FROM AN OIL-PAINTING IN THE POSSESSION OF THE REV. AUGUSTUS GEDGE

And the only other lady of their own degree in the parish was the squire's wife, Mrs. Backhouse, and she bore child for child with the parson's.

As for the church services, twenty was a full morning's attendance, whilst "on afternoons, when folks were late, the old clerk would ring the bell for a short three minutes, then shut the church door in a hurry—even if he saw some one coming in at the lych gate—glad to be quit of his irksome duty for that day."

"Nay, what, i' fegs, we bain't agoing to maunder through t' service for yon," he said one day contemptuously to Mr. Lynn, when remonstrated with for shutting the church door right in the face of Nanny Porter.

"According to old Josh, souls counted by the gross, and the parson's own household did not count at all; and it was a wicked waste of force to spend the means of grace on a unit. So Nanny Porter had to go home again and leave her prayers unsaid; and old Josh took the responsibility on his own soul, and swore a big oath that hers would be none the worse for the lapse."

Pecuniarily the living was valuable, what with heriots and fines (for the rector was also lord of the manor), together with tithes in kind, rent-charges, and compensations. "There was always bad blood at tithing-time, when the parson's tenth 'steuk' was sure to be the largest of the row, the parson's tithe-pig the fattest of the litter; while the geese, ducks, fowls, etc., driven into the rectory back-yard for the service of the church and in payment of these despised and neglected functions, were beyond compare the finest of their respective broods."

Such was Caldbeck seventy years ago. Morally, of course, it would not in these days recognise the description. Physically it is still a bleak out-lying station of the Lake country, and unattractive to any save those who appreciate the wildest form of moorland life, and care to take their doses of nature unadulterated.[1]

[1] For its proper eulogy see *The Lake Country* by E. Lynn Linton, illustrated by W. J. Linton. (Smith Elder, 1864.)

Crosthwaite, on the other hand, was comparatively in the world. It had a south-going coach running thrice a week to London, which could be reached in the reasonable time of three days and two nights. It was less ferocious and uncouth than Caldbeck, though in morals it was no better. It had its High School and a fair sprinkling of resident gentry. "A letter from London cost thirteenpence half-penny, and—as once happened to ourselves, when we were told the contents of a brother's letter as it was handed to us through the little window of the house in the square where the post office stood—if of likely interest to the public, it was quickly read by our sharp-tongued mailsetter before delivery to those whom it concerned. As envelopes had not then been invented, and the folded sides of the sheet were always closely written over to get the whole worth of the postage, a little practice in peeping made the process of deciphering easy enough; and the main threads of all the correspondence afloat were in the hands of our mailsetter aforesaid."

Much of the commerce of the place was in the hands of pedlars, who, with the carriers, brought a breath of larger life into the small places, and told of the great outside world through which they had passed. Amongst these, little Pedroni, the Swiss-Italian, who wore huge rings in his swarthy ears, was remembered through life for the kind of Arabian Nights' splendour of gems and jewellery, silks and shawls and "farlies" of every description, which he brought into their existence.

Then there were the recognised "gaberlunzies," or tramps of either sex, who came regularly in their appointed seasons, "and were hospitably entertained with a bed in the outhouse, supper at the kitchen door, and sixpence or a shilling at parting in the morning." "My father," wrote Mrs. Linton, "always added to his generosity a little homily for the honour of the cloth and the tradition of good things."

The church was a fine old Norman structure, choked with barbarisms. Frescoes had been plastered over and lost, and whitewash vulgarised the great freestone pillars. The

old coloured glass had been removed, and plain squares, interspersed with a few "bulls' eyes," substituted. The pews were the familiar old cattle-pens born of Puritan exclusiveness. The choir, a rough-and-ready agglomeration of young men and women, who practised among themselves as they liked and when they liked. The orchestra, a flageolet, on which the clerk, as official leader, gave the keynote. With all this there was "a peal of bells which was the pride of the parish and acknowledged to be the best in the county." [1] Of them Mrs. Linton wrote many years later—

"They used to give Sunday a special character to my mind, when they broke out into their Sunday song. I should like 'a pæan from the bells' of Crosthwaite Church to be rung over my grave week by week, for ever!" Indeed, she always retained a romantic affection for her old home and its surroundings. Writing in old age to Mr. Wilson of the Keswick Hotel, whom she valued for his friendship and was never tired of thanking for his hospitality, she says, "It is odd how often I dream of Keswick—of being on the road between Portinscale and the vicarage, or in the Lime Pots or at High Hill. And I never hear the sound of a blacksmith's hammer without thinking of Keswick and how often I have heard that from High Hill as I stood on the top terrace of our garden."

These were but the precincts, so to speak, of Eliza Lynn's childhood, for of course the family life of the rectory or vicarage, whichever it might be for the time being, formed a sort of oasis in the rougher and ruder life of the moorland villages. And it was only by degrees, as she grew older and more independent, that the freer air of the neighbourhood would make itself felt in the more restricted atmosphere of the manse.

At Crosthwaite there was a fair sprinkling of neighbouring gentry. Notable amongst these was the poet Southey, with

[1] "The late Mr. Stanger" (Mrs. Linton's brother-in-law), "taking to heart the degraded condition of the building, renovated and beautified it all at the cost of a small fortune; and now it is quite a county cathedral."—*Vide* "Our Lake Land," *Tinsley's Magazine*, September 1867.

whose children the young Lynns associated. Of Southey himself Mrs. Linton knew little save from hearsay, for when he was in health and vigour she was too young to understand either manner or conversation, and when she had expanded he was nothing more than a wreck. Of the Southey girls, however, she retained a vivid remembrance, and used to tell the following story as illustrating their homeliness and hatred of what they considered superfine "nonsense." Mrs. Hemans was staying at Greta Hall, and the young ladies found her too lackadaisical and superior for their somewhat robust tastes. They therefore deliberately brought down the soiled house-linen to mend in her presence in the drawing-room, "as a useful counterpoise to her Rosa Matilda proclivities." As may be imagined, the poetess fled from the room in dismay, and ever after cherished the most profound horror for the uncompromising Marthas who had so wounded her delicacy. Then there were the Speddings of Mirehouse, near Bassenthwaite Lake, for whom Mrs. Linton always cherished a high admiration. Being contemporaries of her elder brothers and sisters, they were not, as she was often heard to regret, amongst her own formative influences. Their thoughtfulness and highmindedness, the quiet dignity of their lives, their inflexible sense of public duty, their orderly management as proprietors and masters, their close friendship with the best thinkers and foremost men of the time, were all matters from which she could not but have been a gainer in the fashioning of her life. Other neighbours were the Dovers of Skiddaw Bank, the Bankses of Shorley Croft, and Lady Moncrieff, who in her widowhood had settled in Keswick with her four young children. These were the more notable among the playmates of the young Lynns.

There were in addition three or four other families of like social condition, who, with a county magnate or two (notably the Senhouses) and a few retired officers of both services, helped to form a somewhat exclusive society.

The dissipations of the little Lynns took the form of picnics in the summer and teas in the winter, supplemented

by the birthday treats, of which there was an average of one in each of the twelve months.

Of a somewhat exceptional tea-party Mrs. Gedge sent me the following amusing account:—"At one house lived two old people, husband and wife, with their old servants, Tim and Nellie. They gave one party in the year, and every one went, though the social standing of the host and hostess was not quite equal to that of the guests. The ladies sat on one side of the drawing-room in a row, and all the gentlemen sat on the other side, and woe be to the daring man who attempted to break the lines! Tim and Nellie used to bring in two well-laden trays. Tim carried the delicious cakes and bread and butter, and Nellie had the tea and coffee. These were solemnly carried round three times, which fortunately took up a great part of the evening. The remaining time was spent in talking in lowered voices to your right and left hand neighbours—for no one moved after being once seated. At nine o'clock two more trays were brought in, holding jellies, blanc-manges, etc., and everything that was nice, with wine and negus. After every one had eaten, and been further pressed to eat as much as possible, the party broke up, and cloaks covered up the turned-up skirts, and all walked back again home. The other parties, of course, were not so peculiar."

The internal economy of the Lynn household was of the simplest. The "servants wore short woollen petticoats, cotton bedgowns and blue-checked aprons, huge caps with flapping borders and flying strings, and thick-soled shoes which wore out the carpets and made a hideous clatter on the bare boards." Oatmeal porridge was the children's staple food, with meat twice a week. "On the 'banyan days' there were large tureens full of milky messes of exquisite savour, or enormous paste puddings—'roly-polys'—of fruit, jam, or undecorated suet. It was simple fare, but it made a stalwart, vigorous set of boys and girls." There was nothing of finery in their lives. The girls wore serviceable woollen spencers, "spring clogs" clasped on the instep with brass "hasps," sun-bonnets of quilted jean, and in

winter woollen gloves without fingers. The boys wore velveteen and corduroy.

In the mornings the little girls "did lessons" with their eldest sister; in the afternoons needlework with the nurse, of which the turn-out in one year totalled a score and a half of shirts for their brothers! On Sundays the catechism, collect, and gospel had to be repeated before church, and in the evening a dose of Doddridge's *Family Expositor* sent them sleepy to bed.

With the servants and humbler neighbours, to whom, by the way, politeness and courtesy were pre-eminently insisted upon—indeed, any rudeness had to be followed by humble apology—the troop of healthy, laughing, motherless little ones were prime favourites. There are even now living some of them or their children who talk and think of the Lynns as belonging to them almost as closely as relations.

One man, Joe Lancaster, the gardener, was especially dear to Mrs. Linton's memory. This is what she had to say of him and he of her:—

"He had," she wrote thirty years afterwards, "been in the militia, and had come out of it with a straight back and trim, orderly, well-disciplined ways,—how we all loved him, and how good and kind he was to us! very seldom losing his temper, though we tried him sorely. . . . He had names for all of us girls; but I only remember 't' lily,' 't' laady o' t' lake,' 't' lile queen o' t' woorrld,' and my own, 't' plague o' t' gardin,' once extended to 't' plague o' t' hale hoose an' t' varsal woorrld,' when specially provoked. . . . There was scant ceremony used towards us by our family servants; and even now, if we go into the houses of those who knew us when we were young, it is, 'Why, there's Lucy! my woord, but ye fettle well!' 'An' hae ye heard tell o' Arthurer? an' how's Sam?' 'Gude sakes, if that isn't Liza! Laavin days, but ye dir graw like yer father!' I think our eldest brother is generally honoured with Mr. as a prefix, and the eldest sister is given her married name; but we of the ruck are just what we were christened, and for the most part our husbands and their names are clean forgotten and put out of sight."

As breaks in the life at Caldbeck Rectory and Crosthwaite Vicarage, there was the long stay, from 1833 to 1838, at Gadshill; and until the bishop's death, occasional visits to Rosecastle. Of the Lynn girls at Gadshill we catch a pretty glimpse from no less a personage than one whom Mrs. Linton believed to be the prototype of Dickens's creation, Tony Weller. His name was Chomley, and he was driver of the Rochester coach. When passing Gadshill House, he was wont to crack his long whip and say to the passengers, "Now, gentlemen, I will show you the prettiest sight in all the country." And at the sound of the well-known crack, a bevy of bright, pretty young girls would appear at the window, nodding and smiling and kissing their hands to the delighted old Jehu.

It was at Gadshill, too, that the first seeds of her early republicanism were sown in Eliza's mind. Daniel O'Connell came down to Rochester and took her impressionable nature by storm with his splendid oratory and reckless daring, with the result that she seriously contemplated running away from home to offer herself as the servant of liberty, and good for any work its champion might give her to do.

So much for the general aspect of things in the Lynn household. Regarding the more intimate relations of Eliza with her father, brothers, and sisters, there will be something to say later. This chapter may, I think, be well concluded with the notes furnished to me by the kindness of Canon Rawnsley, the present Vicar of Crosthwaite. There is, of course, in this some risk of anticipating the development of the story, but it will perhaps tend at the outset to correct the impression which might otherwise be left from the foregoing, that there was a lack of tenderness and reverence in one who often obscured the loving sentimentality of her heart with the truculence and apparent ruthlessness of her pen.

"You ask me," he writes, "for personal reminiscences of Mrs. Lynn Linton. They are very slight, but I willingly give them.

"Whenever it was possible, she came back for a few days' rest at what she always called *home*. She had never broken

with the old ties of affectionate remembrance and of affectionate hearts among the simple Crosthwaite folk who remembered her.

"And as one by one they passed away, she seemed to cling more to those who remained. Hardly a Christmas came, or a New Year passed, but she sent some little souvenir to her old friends, the parishioners who had known her in her young days, and could tell her the traditions of the old Crosthwaite days.

"Then her father's beautiful voice and dramatic way of reading the lessons at morning service attracted people from far and near. For Vicar Lynn's fame in these matters was so widely known, that travellers by the stage-coach to Penrith on the main London road were known, if they heard that Vicar Lynn was in residence, to determine they would halt at Penrith and charter a conveyance to drive over to Crosthwaite to hear and see the old clergyman with the finest voice in Cumberland.

"I do not think that Mrs. Lynn Linton liked parsons in the lump, but she would have taken to her warm heart any Vicar of Crosthwaite for old sake's sake, and she never seemed so bright and cheery as when she came up to the old vicarage to lunch, and then strolled into the various rooms and gave her remembrance of the vision of her girlhood days, not always happy, that the associations with each room called back to mind.

"Then she would walk into the terrace garden, visit the lavender bed she used to know in the old days, and go to the lime tree and look at the initials of her name she had cut upon the trunk years ago, and returning to the terrace, would sit down and fight all her girlhood's battles over again, and speak of the old wild days, as she called them, when she was the tomboy of the family, growing up to be made often enough the scapegrace of the family, sacrificed often by passionate brothers, who loved her well for all their passionateness, upon the family altar of childish discord and childish scrapes.

"I do not, of course, pretend to say that there was not

another side of the picture, but she forgot that other side of impulsiveness, and perhaps at times vixenish, retaliation of her girlhood at the vicarage in the glowing, happy way of love for her dead brothers and sisters with which she always ended her tale.

"Then she would walk down to the church and visit her father's grave, and speak of the time when her ashes would, as she hoped, be laid to rest there, not with any thought in her mind or tone in her voice other than a kind of natural acquiescence in the immutable law of nature, and I think a wish to rest.

"Latterly she gave me certainly to understand that the hard life of journalism by which she earned her living was very wearying and wearing, and all she hoped for was that her health would stand the needed wear and tear till the end.

"Now and again, not without a break in her voice, she would say she hungered for the old days of simple faith and certain forelooking to the land that is very far off, but she always left me with the impression that instead of thinking scorn of those whose faith was unshaken, after the manner of some who have broken from old moorings, she, on the contrary, honoured those, and was helped by them.

"And she had long got beyond the view of the cynic, and only desired that, in the light that is unapproachable to, she too might see light. If I were asked what it was that made her so love the old Crosthwaite parish and church, I should answer it was because here her early thoughts of God and nature came back with each returning visit in strength and fulness, and she felt here as she had felt in the old days of her girlhood's opening power.

"I think what struck me most about her now was that the real Mrs. Lynn Linton was not the Mrs. Lynn Linton of her books or her newspaper and magazine articles; that however at times she dipped her pen in gall, she kept her heart and her tongue when in communion with her friends free of all bitterness."

CHAPTER II

EARLY YEARS (CONTINUED)

JUST as every moment in time is the "conflux of two eternities," so every child is to itself the centre of the whole universe. By some, perhaps the majority, the fact is never intensely realised. To others there comes a sudden and severe attack of self-consciousness, which as often as not exhibits itself in bitter resentment against authority and a painful and unbeautiful self-assertiveness. If not of very active growth, the disease soon yields to ordinary treatment, and dies away in the wholesome atmosphere of activities dictated by rulers and governors. Where, on the other hand, it is of the irrepressible sort, it must find a legitimate outlet in strenuous and original action, or the patient will become a rebel and a nuisance to those about him.

Eliza Lynn took the disease badly, and for the first conscious years of her life, in the expressive language of old Lancaster, was "t' plague o' t' hale hoose an' t' varsal woorrld." That her circumstances were not those which she would have chosen for herself, goes without the saying. We all are apt to hold that we should have been, or accomplished, something better, had such and such been different in our early surroundings; but of this we are probably the very worst judges possible. And I think it must be admitted that in writing of her childhood, Mrs. Linton was apt to lose sight of the fact that hers was but one point of view, and that amongst her brothers and sisters there were eleven other points of view from which matters might justly have been regarded in a very different light.

As a result, we find a certain vein of self-justification, which ignores the rights of others and makes all things centre in Eliza Lynn, running through her autobiographical writing, for which, if proper conclusions are to be arrived at, allowance must constantly be made. At the same time, it must be remembered that things affect us very much as we regard them, and it is for this reason, as well as because other sources of information are comparatively meagre, that in the writing of Mrs. Linton's biography we need not hesitate to draw largely from her own descriptions of her early years.

We have in the last chapter caught some glimpses of Eliza Lynn's surroundings, as Mrs. Lynn Linton saw them, casting back her memory through half a century. We will in this chapter again look at things through her spectacles, rejecting here and qualifying there as occasion offers, and as rebutting or modifying evidence is obtainable.

In giving these early reminiscences, consecutiveness cannot be closely observed. Nor is strict chronology of prime importance in studying the early formation of character. There are progresses and retrogressions, there are successes and disappointments. But it is the fact that the soldier did fight his battles once upon a time that is of importance, and that the fights left behind them the decorations that can be seen and the wounds which are hidden away. It is different, of course, when the soldier comes to take his place as a leader of men. Then he is helping to make history, and dates, like milestones, must mark his progress.

Which is to say that, in attempting to obtain an impression of Mrs. Linton's early days, the reader must be content with what is rather a kaleidoscopic than a spectroscopic display.

First, then, we will see how the moral rule that obtained during early childhood presented itself to her retrospect. Theoretically, as has been said, Mr. Lynn committed his large family to the care of Providence. "Practically," Mrs. Lynn Linton says, "this meant the control of the younger by the elder. The eldest brother was the master of the boys, the eldest sister the mistress of the girls, with intermediate

gradations of relative supremacy according to seniority. Hence there reigned among us the most disastrous system of tyranny, exercised by these unfledged viceroys of Providence over their subordinates—a tyranny for which there was no redress, however great the wrong. It was of no use to appeal to my father. Had he sided with the complainant, things would have been worse in the end, and there would then have been revenge and retaliation to add to the original count. It was better to take things as they came, or to fight it out for one's self. And there was always some one still younger to whom it could be passed on; which was so far a comfort! Our house, in those days, was like nothing so much as a farmyard full of cockerels and pullets for ever spurring and pecking at one another. It was the trial of strength that always goes on among growing creatures—especially among young males; but it was bad to bear while it lasted."

Now this sounds somewhat formidable expressed in terse and vigorous language as it is, but after all it is not so very unlike the tale which many a "rebel of the family" would have to tell of the system by which he got licked into shape and eventually became a possible member of society, and as likely as not the one member of which the family in after years became proudest.

Nor was it surprising that Eliza, both by the inherent defects of her character as well as by her position as youngest, should suffer most, and indeed far more than her surroundings in themselves warranted.

Hers was just such a character as was bound to get more kicks than halfpence in a little republic of this sort. Quick to resent, sensitive to kindness, rebellious and affectionate, wilful and soft-hearted, she was of necessity ever in tumult and turmoil, followed by disgrace, punishment, and repentance.

Then she was different in her habits to the others—the one apart—and the *tertium quid* comes so naturally to be the sport, the butt of the rest. Her shortsightedness drove her in upon herself. She was solitary, studious, and thought-

ful. She seemed stupid to those who did not realise her physical defect. Children are naturally intolerant, and when she truthfully said she could not see things, she was accused of lying. And we who knew her sincerity and honesty in after years realise how this must have been the bitterest experience of all. Part and parcel of this truthfulness was the dangerous frankness with which she expressed her likes and dislikes, and showed her partiality for this or that member of her family. "Easily provoked," she writes of herself, "and daring in reprisals, but, as the youngest, the least formidable and most defenceless, I was too good fun to be let alone. I was like the drunken helot told off to self-degradation for the moral benefit of the young Spartans, for I was teased and bullied till I became as furious as a small wild beast. . . . Physically (these troubles) hardened me to pain, but morally they roused in me that false and fatal courage which breeds the dare-devils of society and makes its criminals die game. But I was subdued at once when any one, by rare chance and gleam of common sense, remonstrated with me lovingly or talked to me rationally."

It is curious to find that even thus early in her life she was looked upon by her father and others rather in the light of a naughty boy than a weak and defenceless little girl, naughty or otherwise. That one felt her in after life, with all her sweet womanliness, to have so much of the man in her, was probably due to the same alloy in her composition. Indeed, alluding to this, she has more than once said with something of gravity, that when she was born, a boy was due in the family, and it was only the top-coating that had miscarried.

Still, with all her masculinity, it was one of the delightful contradictions of her nature that she insisted upon her womanliness.

One day a baby was brought to the house, and Mr. Lynn came upon Eliza nursing it.

"Well, Eliza," he exclaimed with surprise, "I never knew you were so much of a woman."

The remark sounds innocent enough, but Eliza was instantly up in arms, flying into a violent passion at what she felt was a slight upon her character.

It must not, however, be supposed that there was nothing in her family relations to relieve what she herself says was mainly a life of turbulence, mischief, flagrant disobedience, ungovernable tempers, and inevitable punishment. It was during these early years that she conceived two violent attachments which were destined to continue so long as life lasted. The objects of her devotion were her third brother, Arthur Thomas, and her youngest sister, Lucy, the late Mrs. Augustus Gedge.

She had no clear remembrance of this brother Arthur before a certain day on which she had braved the wrath of her second brother George, the then viceroy of the family, and had been soundly thrashed for her pains. From that day, however, on which Arthur had turned upon the "viceroy," and fought him for what he considered a piece of cruelty to the little sister, he stood out in memory from the crowd of elders, from whom the younger children were separated as entirely as sixth form boys from boys of the lower school. "After the scuffle," she says, "Arthur took me on his knee and kissed me to comfort me. From that moment there woke up in me a kind of worship for this brother, just ten years my senior—a worship which, old as I am—still older as he is—I retain to this hour. We have lived apart all our lives. In over forty years I have seen him for two at a stretch. But when I realise the ideal of knightly honour and manly nobleness—of that kind of proud incorruptibility which knows no weakness for fear nor favour—I think of my brother Arthur far beyond the seas. He who as a boy braved his elder brother for the sake of a little girl of five who could not defend herself—as a man calmly faced an excited mob yelling for their blood, to place under the shadow of the British flag two trembling wretches who had only his courage between them and death.

"The early life and adventures of this brother are a romance in themselves. Had he lived in mythic times he

would have been another Amadis, a second Wallace. He is like some offshoot of heroic days, rather than a man of a commercial generation; and in him the grand old Roman spirit survives and is re-embodied."

In 1832, being at that time twenty years of age, he ran away from home, burning with enthusiasm to fight for the Poles. Taken prisoner by the Russians, he was ordered to be hanged. The rope was actually round his neck, when the commanding officer, riding up to the place of execution, was so struck by his beauty that he ordered his life to be spared. "It was a pity," he said, "to kill so fine a young fellow." Imprisonment on an island followed. After two or three years he was released, and returned home in so deplorable a condition, that his sisters, meeting him on the road, took him for a common tramp.

Eventually he became consul at Galveston, Texas, U.S.A., dying at the age of seventy-six in the year 1888. He left his small fortune to his devoted sister. Over his grave she erected a marble tombstone bearing this legend—

"A noble of nature's own making."

Amongst her papers she has preserved his side of a voluminous correspondence. From that we learn that, however much he may have been her lord and protector rather than her equal and friend in early days, in after life he came to look upon her with enough admiration and confidence to satisfy even her ardent affection.

But if Arthur was her lord, little Lucy was her "natural chum." The description of "Edwin" in *Christopher Kirkland* is that of Lucy in real life, and, with the sexes changed, reads as follows:—

"Some eighteen months younger, I was the stronger and bigger of the two. She had always been a delicate girl; and the nursery tradition about her was that when she was born she was the exact length of a pound of butter, was put into a quart-pot, and dressed in my eldest sister's doll's clothes—the ordinary baby-clothes were too large, and her doll was a big one for those days. I was her slave and protector in one. She had none of the emotional intensity, none of the fierceness

of temper, the fool-hardy courage, the inborn defiance, neither had she the darkness of mood nor the volcanic kind of love, which characterised me. She was sweeter in temper; more sprightly, as well as more peaceful in disposition; more amenable to authority; of a lighter, gentler, more manageable and more amiable nature altogether. She was the family favourite and the family plaything. . . . My brothers would have kissed a hedgehog as soon as me. She was never in mischief and never in the way. She cared only to play quiet games in the garden when it was fair, or to sit in the embrasure of the window when it was wet and we were forced to keep the house. . . . Her supreme pleasure was to sit on her 'copy' (a kind of stool), in a 'cupboardy house'—that is, in the midst of a ring of chairs forming a defence work against intruders—while I told her stories 'out of my own head.'

"Besides this constitutional delicacy, to make those in authority tender in their dealing with her, she was the most beautiful of us all. Arthur was incomparably the handsomest of the boys—did not his beauty once save his life?—but Lucy was the loveliest of the children. She was like one of Sir Joshua's cherubs. Her head was covered with bright golden curls, her skin was like a pale monthly rose, and she had big soft blue eyes which no one could resist. Every one loved and petted her, as I have said. Our father, who saw in her the reproduction of our dead mother, had even a more tender feeling for her than for any of his other favourites; my own hero, Arthur, loved her ten thousand times more than he loved me; and James, our tyrannical 'kingling,' who spared no one else, spared Lucy. But no one sacrificed to her as I did, and no one loved her with such fanatical devotion. It was but natural, then, that she should lord it over me with that tremendous force which weakness ever has over loving strength; and that I, the born rebel but the passionate lover, should give to that weakness the submission which no authority could wring from me. Also it came into the appointed order of things that I should bore her by my devotion and that she should pain me by her indifference. It was a preface to the life that

had to come—the first of the many times when I should make shipwreck of my peace through love.

"Yet had it not been for this devotion to Lucy, and the feeling that I was of use to her for all her coldness to me, my life would have been even more painful than it was. I was so isolated in the family, so out of harmony with them all, and by my own faults of temperament such a little Ishmaelite and outcast, that as much despair as can exist with childhood overwhelmed and possessed me."

Surely, few words more pathetic were ever written than that simple confession wrung from her by her resolute truthfulness: "My own hero, Arthur, loved Lucy ten thousand times more than he loved me." But this habit of accepting the inevitable tragedies of existence and facing them with all available courage, was a notable characteristic which, as we shall see, stood her in good stead through life. The useless folly of "clutching into the wheel-spokes of destiny, and saying to the spirit of the time, 'Turn back, I command thee,'" was with her too self-evident to admit of a moment's hesitation. With greater wisdom, she "yielded to the inexorable and accounted even that the best"—not the best for her individual happiness, but the best for that humanity of which she considered herself so inconsiderable a unit.

It was in these outcast days, as she felt them, that there came to her the curious conviction, so common to children who find themselves detached, by physical or mental differences, from their fellows, that she could not be her father's child at all, that she was a foundling, some day to be reclaimed and taken home by her own, who would love and understand her.

"I had," she writes, "a favourite hiding-place in the lime trees at the foot of the garden, where I used to lose my time, my strength, and mental health in this fantastic idea. Granting all the difficulties my family had to contend with in me, I do not think the desolation of a young child could go beyond the secret hope of one day finding herself an alien to her own—of some day being claimed by the unknown—

strangers coming out of space sure to be more gentle and sympathetic than those others! But I always added, as a codicil to this testament of despair, that if ever I did find these unknown dear ones, Arthur should still be my king and Lucy my beloved, and that no new tie should break these two golden links of the old sad, heavy chain. As another proof of my childish desolation, if also of my intemperate nature, I remember how once, in a fit of mad passion for some slight put on me by my eldest sister, whereat the others had laughed and jeered at me, I first fought them all round, then rushed off to a large draw-well we had in the coach-yard—we were not then at Crosthwaite, but at my father's private house in Kent —intending to throw myself down and end for ever a life which was at the moment intolerable and emphatically not worth living. The heavy cover was over the mouth, and I could not move it. While I was trying, the gardener came along; and, seeing that I had been crying, he good-naturedly took me to the apple loft, where he filled my pockets with golden russets—which consoled me grandly, and lifted me over that little stile of sorrow into a flowery field of content. I was then ten years old."

As has been hinted, no inconsiderable part of Eliza Lynn's early life was spent in solitude, study, and speculation. We will here try to gain some idea of this mental life which was now to develop itself more actively alongside the physical. It was within a year or two of the episode described above, that, like Maggie Tulliver, she seems suddenly to have become conscious of the birth of a distinct mental existence. Up to that moment any book-learning that she had assimilated was "of the pothook-and-hanger degree—the mere elements."

It was somewhere about her eleventh year that there woke up in her the burning desire to know. Hitherto she had received with contentment the *Moral Tales* of Miss Edgeworth, and with trembling the wonders of *The Arabian Nights*. She had highly approved of *Robinson Crusoe* and *Elizabeth, or the Exiles of Siberia*, but had been prejudiced against *The Pilgrim's Progress*, since it was

generally "improved" for her benefit. When Passion came on the scene, every one knew that Eliza was meant. When Patience appeared, there was an unmistakable appreciation of Lucy.

But perhaps the best remembered literary delight was the turning over of the coloured plates of "the battle-horse of the study library"—the *Encyclopædia Londinensis.*

Now she suddenly realised that there was something outside her narrow circle. The exciting cause would seem to have been the return of her brother Arthur from his Russian prison. There and then she became conscious that there was something else to be looked for in life than mere physical enjoyment. History and geography were things that wanted knowing—and those strange books in unintelligible languages in her father's library which she had peeped into with bewilderment—they too must in due time be forced to yield the secrets which now they held so fast.

She had already embarked upon a full-blown novel, to be called *Edith of Poland*, and had woven many "a queer garland of doubtful rhyme and halting feet to the pretty playmate who was at once her care and mistress." True, the former bore a strange likeness to that thrilling romance aforesaid, *Elisabeth, or the Exiles of Siberia*, and the latter were probably as intrinsically worthless as such things generally are, but they were the outward and visible sign of an inward and mental activity.

From this time she set herself with dogged persistence to learn what there was no one to teach her. Astonishing as it may sound, she declares—and this was vouched for by Mrs. Gedge—that from eleven to seventeen she, year after year, attacked, absolutely unaided, one language after another, until she could read with ease and translate aloud rapidly as she read, French, Italian, German, and Spanish, supplementing them with a smattering of Latin, Greek, and even Hebrew. Nor is this merely a matter of hearsay, for I have myself handled volumes of extracts in her delicate handwriting made at this time in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. All

knowledge of these languages had passed from her in later life, and I do not think she could even decipher the Greek or Hebrew characters. True, she scamped the grammar, neglected rules and learnt only words; but with an intellect quick to understand, and a temperament impatient to possess, she made her own *Les aventures de Télémaque;* she brought to life the conventional portraits of Petrarch and Dante which had fascinated her in the old encyclopædia; she palpitated through the tragedy of *Faust*, and guessed vaguely at the underlying philosophy and the tender satire of *Don Quixote.*

But we must not linger unduly over these years of preparation. Suffice it to say that, whether rightly or wrongly, she always considered that she would have gone further and done better had she been subjected to severe discipline in her youth instead of being left to grow up in absolute mental unrestraint. "I have," she often complained, "never been able to put myself into harness since."

As her biographer, however, I find myself sufficiently convinced that this lack of early teaching was more than compensated for by the development of other qualities which might well have remained dormant under more systematic instruction.

It was the lack of rigidity and pedantry in her mind that was perhaps one of her greatest charms, and how easily she might have lost in humanity what she would have gained in scholarship!

CHAPTER III

ELIZA LYNN AT SEVENTEEN

ELIZA LYNN was now seventeen years of age. Of medium height (a line or so under five feet five inches), with good figure and erect carriage, she gave the impression of being taller than she really was. Her eyes (half hidden behind their spectacles[1]) were large and somewhat prominent; her mouth was beautiful. Her hair was light brown and abundant, and her complexion brilliant. She was a notable-looking girl. Writing to Mrs. Gulie Moss in 1892, she says of herself, "I am not a handsome woman and never was, even when I was young and slight, and with my 'wealth of golden-brown hair.'" She often said that up to this age she was totally careless of her personal appearance —that she was unkempt and slovenly. One day some one remarked upon the beauty of her hair and the shamefulness of being uncleanly. From that moment she dated the passion for order and spotlessness which all who knew her in after life remember as an inalienable characteristic.

Nor was this crisis of self-respect the only one through which she was destined to pass in this time of young womanhood. It was thus early that she was nearing the parting of the ways between orthodoxy and heterodoxy.

Hitherto, morals, religion, and politics had been to her terms of certain application. Up till now she had been firmly convinced that she held "the fee-simple of all great truths in her hand." "No question could have two sides; no opponent could be an honest man." English men and

[1] Speaking of her shortsightedness, she said that when at fifteen she was provided with spectacles it was as if a new life had been given her.

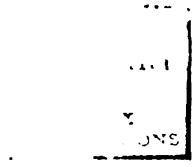
women were God's modern peculiar people. "The English Protestant Church was the very Delos of Truth." "Christian prayers said in a foreign tongue were not heard with so much pleasure nor answered with so much precision as ours." Englishmen were "the best gentlemen, the bravest men, the most enlightened and most virtuous people on the face of the earth; and every departure from their special ways of living and thinking was a wandering into the desert with destruction at the far end." Such was, as with many others, the delightful dogmatism of her youth.

Then, besides being a devout Christian, she was an ardent Republican—the latter, indeed, because of the former; and if the "Sermon on the Mount" were to be literally received, of which she had at present no doubt, there was a further logical step—it had to be acted upon.

"I began," she says, "by renouncing all the pleasant softnesses and flattering vanities of my youth, and made myself a moral hybrid, half ascetic, half stoic. I accustomed myself to privations and held luxuries as deadly sins. Sensual by nature, I cut myself off from all sweets, of which I was inordinately fond; and because I was a heavy sleeper, and fond of that warm, enervating morning doze which made me always late for breakfast, for a whole year I lay on the floor, and despised bed as an unrighteous effeminacy. Never cowardly to pain, I taught myself to bear mild torture without wincing—as when I one day dug out a tooth with my knife as a good exercise of fortitude. Because I once saw myself in the glass with a strange and sudden consciousness of the beauty of my youth and personality, I turned that offending bit of blistered quicksilver to the wall, and for six months never saw my face again. During that time I had to undergo many things from my sisters because of the untidiness of my general appearance; for though I had become scrupulously clean by now, as part of the physical enjoyment of life,—clean even to my long brown freckled hands,—I was but a sloven in the decorative part, and never knew the right side from the wrong, and scarcely the back of things from the front. I gave away all the 'treasures'

ELIZA LYNN

FROM A PORTRAIT BY SAMUEL LAWRENCE IN THE POSSESSION OF THE REV. AUGUSTUS GEDGE



I had accumulated since my childhood, in imitation of the apostles and according to Christ's injunctions to the rich young man; and no one but myself knew of that little altar which I had built up in the waste place behind the shrubbery, where I used to carry the first of such fruit as I specially liked, to lay it thereon as my offering to God—to wither in the sun or be devoured by insects and birds. I set myself secret penance for secret sins. I prayed often and fervently, and sometimes seemed to be borne away from the things of time and space and carried into the very presence of God, as it were in a trance—a still living Gerontius. I realised my faith as positively as if it had been a thing I could see and touch; my confirmation was a consecration; and when first I received the communion, I felt as if I had tabernacled the Lord in my own body, and that I was henceforth His, so that I could never sin again. . . . In a word, I lived in the Christian's sanctified egotism—believing that all the forces of heaven and hell were mainly occupied with the salvation or destruction of my one poor miserable little soul; and that the most important thing between earth and sky was, whether a hot-blooded girl with more sincerity than judgment flew into a rage when she should have curbed her temper, or heroically checked her impulses of sensuality in the matter of jam-pudding and the fruit garden.

"But during all this time of my faithful endeavours after a higher life, I was just as intolerable to my family as before, and my passions were still my masters. . . . The boiling blood I called on God to calm boiled ever as madly as before, and with all my faith in the Divine presence and power, I was conscious that I was not answered."

Nor is it surprising that with all this extravagance of aspiration and its failure in practice, her father was found to have but little sympathy. To believe the Bible, obey parents, say prayers night and morning, be regular at church, and keep free from forbidden sins, was an intelligible, orderly, and practical sort of religion. But the inconsistency of high endeavour and protestations of a desire after "superior piety," with an acted life of passion and misconduct, meant nothing

more to him, as they have meant nothing more to scores of fathers in every generation, than hypocrisy and moral fraud.

That it properly connoted something other than this is of course clear enough to those who have in like manner found shipwreck in a purely emotional faith. As a result, Eliza Lynn was left, for all the help she could get from her father, to face alone that sense of being fated to sin and foredoomed to perdition which was to drive her in desperation—not, of course, all at once, but by gradual and certain steps—to a complete dissent from the creed which she had hitherto taken for granted.

But it must not for a moment be supposed that this period of mental stress was unrelieved by physical enjoyment of the keenest. "Bitter-sweet" she called her life at this time.

"No one," she says, "who drew in the sweet breath of flowers or stood against the storm-winds, glad in youth and rejoicing in strength, enjoyed the great gift of life more than I. And no one suffered more. My recollection of all my young life is that of a tempest. I never knew rest, never compassed the outermost circle of serenity. I was always either violently elated or as violently miserable—always one with the gods or down among the demons who people hell."

And then it was that she began to dream dreams. With immeasurable vitality — the immortality of youth — what could she not do? The time must come when liberty would be hers, and this beating of wings against the prison bars of home would be a thing of the past. Then the great decision must be come to. Should she be artist or author? Ultimate success was of course certain. And the claims of one or other were not long in the balance. Her shortsightedness must put any rivalry with Raffaelle out of the question. It was clear as daylight that she must compass the overtopping of Gibbon or Scott.

About this time it was that she came across a book on *The Difficulties of Genius*, which greatly influenced her mind. Youthful vanity of course told her that she was a genius, and that the book applied directly to her. In reference to it she says, "It had given stability to my hopes, and

as it were a practical backbone to my ambition, by the examples of others who, as untaught as I, had yet by their own industry and resolve risen to be the shining lights of their generation."

It was now, too, that a curious bit of hallucination came to her.

"It was All Halloween," she says, "and we of the North still believed in spells and charms. My sisters and I were melting lead, roasting nuts, and wasting eggs—whereby the white drawn up by the heat of the hand through water might determine our future—when I was dared to that supreme trial: to go upstairs into my bedroom, lock the door, and, with the candle set on the dressing-table, deliberately pare and eat an apple, looking at myself in the glass all the while. I would in those days have accepted any challenge offered me—to go into a lion's den, if need be: this bit of fantastical bravery was easy enough! Jauntily and defiantly I bounded up the stairs, locked the door, pared and began to eat my apple, with my eyes fixed on the glass. And there, suddenly out of the semi-darkness—the eyes looking into mine—peered a face from over my shoulder; a dark, mocking, sinister face, which I could draw now as I saw it then—how many years ago! Broad in the low flat brow, with dark hair waved above the arched eyebrows; the eyes deep set, dark and piercing; the nose long and pointed; the thin mouth curled into a sneer; the chin narrow but the jaw wide—it was all so vivid that I turned sharply round, saying, 'Who is there?'

"No one was there, of course; and I spoke into a void more gruesome than that grim presence would have been.

"The vision did not return, and I ate my apple to the last pip steadily; but when I went downstairs they all laughed, and said I was as white as if I had seen a ghost; and they were sure I had; and what was it like?

"'The devil," I said gruffly; on which Laura said mildly—

"'Upon my word, Lizzie, you are more like a bear than a girl.'

"Long after this I had in my ears the sound of rushing wings. They were so loud that I used to wake from my

sleep with the noise as of large wings about my bed. And with these were mingled whisperings and voices; but no intelligible words ever came to me, though I made no doubt they were the same voices as those which haunted Christian when passing through the Valley of the Shadow. I was studying very hard at this time, and in the full swing of all my private penances and eccentric self-discipline; and my nervous system was for the moment strained, despite my powerful constitution."

By this time the conditions of life at Crosthwaite had considerably changed. The railway station not twenty miles away—and the penny post in 1840—had brought a new influx of life and motion into that "stagnant little stretch of backwater," and with its daily coaches to and fro it had become one of the "favourite show-places of the kingdom, and as luxurious and polished as the rest."

As a result, now and again such celebrities as Carlyle or Whewell were to be met momentarily by the young Lynns in their enlarging circle of acquaintances, and it was always with pride that Mrs. Linton recalled the special notice taken of her at this period by that tragic genius, Hartley Coleridge, who because of his besetting sin could never be kept long on a visit anywhere, and whose comings and goings were therefore always fitful and unsatisfactory.

As I have hinted, Eliza Lynn's mind was now ripe for that change in speculative thought which was to carry her far enough away from the beliefs and presumptions of her childhood. And in dealing with these matters, it is not my intention — indeed, I think it outside the province of a biographer—to point out where I may consider her to have been wrong in her premises, illogical in her reasoning, or unfair in her arguments.

The biographer's views upon these subjects are of no matter whatever. Where his subject has chosen to give opportunity it is merely his concern to set down what were the speculations and reflections, leaving them to commend themselves to the reader or not, as the case may be.

Nor is there in such a course the danger to orthodoxy,

in the highest sense of that much misused word, which there once might have been.

As Froude says—

"The creed of eighteen centuries is not about to fade away like an exhalation, nor are the new lights of science so exhilarating that serious persons can look with comfort to exchanging one for the other."

It cannot surely fail to be admitted that the problems with which Eliza Lynn's intellect found itself face to face in its exceptional precocity are now in the air, and are commonly to be met with in the more slowly matured minds of all classes. And this being so, surely only good can come of a clear statement of them. Thus by degrees may come to be recognised the imperative need there is for that "Free Discussion of Theological Difficulties" so powerfully advocated thirty-six years ago by the author of *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, and hitherto only very partially responded to. It is only, indeed, by meeting vital difficulties in the open that the Christian religion can hope to retain or regain its hold upon a generation whose intellects are stimulated beyond the point of mere acquiescence.

It must be understood that what here follows was but the prelude to that fuller materialism which Mrs. Linton afterwards accepted. Much of it, I am aware, will sound puerile and unessential. But, paradoxical though it may appear, it is for that very reason that it would seem to be of prime importance. A little open discussion, a little intellectual sympathy, and perchance a few unimportant admissions, would as likely as not have disposed of difficulties which, confined in the forcing-house of her own mind, arrived quickly at a luxuriant and irrepressible adolescence.

Here is her own account of the first breath of disenchantment which touched for her the hitherto unquestionable Bible narrative.

"One early summer's day," she says, "I was sitting where I had no business to be, under the hedge of the as yet unmown hayfield at the foot of the garden. I had taken with me to read in quietness Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. If my

father had seen it in my hands he would have forbidden it to me; which was why I went where I was not likely to be found even if looked for. I was digging away at the myth of Nisus and Scylla, and the purple lock wherein the old king's strength lay, when, for the first time, I was struck by the likeness of this story to that of Samson and Delilah. Hitherto all the Bible stories had been on a raised platform apart, and there was no analogy with them to be found elsewhere. I knew my Ovid pretty well by now; and immediately, on the discovery of this point of resemblance, there flashed across me also the likeness between the story of Myrrha and that of Lot's daughters—of Iphigenia and Isaac for the one part, in the substitution of a doe for the one, of a ram for the other; and of Iphigenia and Jephthah's daughter for the other, where the human element is alone retained. With this my mind went off on the now familiar track of the virgin births, when suddenly—in that strangely rapid and vivid manner in which such things come to me, as if it were really the quick opening of a closed door and the headlong rush into a newly furnished and brilliantly lighted chamber—there shot through my brain these words, which seemed to run along the page in a line of light: 'What difference is there between any of these stories and those like to them in the Bible? — between the loves of the sons of God for the daughters of men, and those of the gods of Greece for the girls of Athens and Sparta? between the women made mothers by mysterious influences, and those made mothers by divine favour? between the legends of old times and the stories of Sara, Hannah, Elisabeth—and the Virgin Mary?'

"When this last name came, a terrible faintness took hold of me. The perspiration streamed over my face like rain, and I trembled like a frightened horse. My heart, which for a few seconds had beaten like a hammer, now seemed to cease altogether. The light grew dim; the earth was vapoury and unstable; and, overpowered by an awful dread, I fell back among the long grass where I was sitting as if I had been struck down by an unseen hand. But this physical faintness soon passed, and my mind went on following the

line of thought I had begun, as if I were talking aloud to some one at hand.

"No one at the time knew anything about the miraculous conception of Mary's child. Joseph himself was only warned in a dream not to doubt her, for that she was with child by the Holy Ghost, as announced to her by the Angel Gabriel. Does any one know more now than was known then? If this Christian marvel is true, why not all the rest? Why should we say that Mary alone spoke the truth and that every one else has lied? But spirits do not come to women; there were no such beings as those old gods who were said to have come down from Olympus to mingle in the affairs of mortals; that passage in Genesis about the sons of God is a mystery we cannot fathom. And we know that there is such a being as the Angel Gabriel—such a Divine person as the Holy Ghost. Do we know this? Have we more certainty than had the old Greeks when they believed in the power of Jupiter and the divine manhood of Apollo, and in the celestial origin of those fatherless sons brought into the world by maiden mothers, who swore to their womanly innocence for the one part, and their human exaltation by divine favour for the other? Surely yes! The Miraculous Incarnation has been affirmed by all the churches; and the proofs are—the star which guided the Magi, and the song of the angels in the sky to the shepherds watching their flocks. But who can certify to these proofs? Why did not others see that star as well as the Magi?—and who knows whether the shepherds heard the song, or only imagined it?

"These thoughts clung to me, and left me no peace night or day. Ever and ever the Mystery of the Incarnation became more and more a subject of perplexity and doubt, and of dread lest that doubt should broaden into denial. Brought into line with these legends of former times—contrasted with the old classic myths and the stories in the very Bible itself—it suddenly seemed to lose its special character and to be merely one like others. It was no longer exceptional and divine—it had become historic and human. Therefore it fell within the range of criticism, and might be judged of according

Christopher Kirkland may, if they choose, find many more of a like nature. Further, it must be remembered that Mrs. Linton was intentionally ignoring the obverse of the matter, and that the whole thing was in the nature of a Devil's Advocacy. Her mind was curiously unjudicial. She jumped to conclusions and advocated them through thick and thin. She was a partisan to the backbone, and had the strength —and weakness—of those who cannot see both sides of a question.

That her methods were crude and unphilosophic she herself fully recognised. In her own words, she flung her bricks on the ground without order or constructive endeavour.

But, however insufficient her reasons may appear to us, it is perfectly evident that she found them irresistible, and now turned her back for ever on the peaceful regions of unquestioning faith, and set her face towards the bristling wilderness of intellectual doubt.

CHAPTER IV

FROM CROSTHWAITE TO LONDON

WE must now, as briefly as possible, deal with an episode, the importance of which lies mainly in the fact that it was the prelude to — indeed, the proximate cause of—the dash for freedom that Eliza Lynn was about to make.

Her own account of the matter in *Christopher Kirkland* reads perplexingly and unconvincingly. This is due to the fact that, in strict accord with the unfortunate plan of the book, the not unusual phenomenon of a girl's infatuation for a woman eight or ten years her senior is metamorphosed into the passionate devotion of a youth for a young and fascinating married woman. The result is that the whole situation is changed, and wrong causations of necessity suggest themselves.

As Tennyson says, "Either sex alone is half itself," and what should we say of Antony and Cleopatra staged for us with both the protagonists in breeches or both in petticoats?

The incident must as far as possible be cleared of its unnatural atmosphere. It is sufficiently bizarre without any eccentric additions.

It was immediately after the severe attack of speculative troubles dealt with in the last chapter, that this very different kind of disturbance came into Eliza Lynn's life.

There had lately settled in the near neighbourhood of the vicarage a certain Mr. and Mrs. X——.

Brilliant, clever, and beautiful with the spiritualised pathetic beauty of delicate health, evidently not too happy in her marriage, a fine musician, and an artist far above the

average, what wonder that from her first appearance in the backwater of Crosthwaite, Mrs. X——, the refined and elegant woman of the world, should take by storm the country clergyman's family, from Mr. Lynn down to the youngest?

To Mrs. Linton, with an imagination presumably sobered by age and chastened by experience, this lady ever stood in memory as something unapproachable and supreme. What more likely, then, than that she should have seemed to the impressionable girl "an impersonate poem or embodied music, or a spirit half transparently incarnate, rather than a living, solid, flesh-and-blood reality?"

At any rate, always inclined to run into extremes as she was, it soon came to be that the day when she was not with the X——'s was to Eliza a day of deadly dulness, to be lived through only for the hope of the morrow with its possibility of a visit.

Away from her friends she found no pleasure, save in the books hallowed as being loans from them, or in the music she had heard Mrs. X—— play.

From the first the X——'s laid themselves out to be useful to the young Lynns. By degrees a certain special intimacy grew up between the rough, wild, and passionate girl and the elegant, silken, clever woman of the world, who seemed to the Cumberland lassie queen and goddess in one.

But to Eliza the absorbing and entrancing intimacy was at first far from bringing unalloyed happiness. Bitter-sweet as she had found her life hitherto, so bitter-sweet she made this friendship by the alternations of frantic jealousy, lest Mrs. X—— should love her sisters better than herself, with the triumph of assured appreciation. It was a state of feverish unrest dotted with divinely happy hours. After a time, however, Mrs. X——'s preference for her became so obvious that this state of uncertainty passed, and she yielded herself to what seemed in retrospect a kind of enchantment.

"The strange deifying reverence that I felt for her," she wrote, "was due partly to my age and temperament and partly to her own philosophy. She belonged to a school of

thought quite unlike any I had ever met with. . . . She was emphatically a transcendentalist, and in a certain sense a pantheist. . . . She believed in the interfusion of souls . . . she believed in the oneness of God with life, of God with matter, with thought, with emotion, with the cosmic forces of the universe. . . . She was also in a sense a metempsychosist, and believed that we all had known each other in another life—all of us who loved in this."

And then she would tell the impressionable girl, more than half confused by this new and incomprehensible talk, and wholly fascinated by the rapt, sibyl-like look on the beautiful face, that such was the bond which united *them*.

"'Dearest child,' she said one day, 'God has given you to me. You are mine in spirit now and for ever. Never forget this moment, Eliza, when our souls have met and recognised each other once again across the long ages which have separated them.'

"Then she stooped her gracious face to mine, and lightly kissed me on the eyes and forehead.

"Henceforth all things were transformed to me, and life meant a new existence, as it had a new message. The sunrises and the sunsets, the song of the birds, the flowers in the fields, the shadows of the clouds on the mountains, the reflections in the lake and the ripple of the blue waves, the voice of the waters making music in cascades, the budding and the fall of the leaves of the trees—all were the circumstances of a more beautiful world than that in which I had hitherto lived. Nature had a secret language which was revealed to me, and I understood the hidden meaning of things which hitherto had had no meaning at all. I, like Mrs. X——, felt and saw God everywhere—but when I thought of God, she stood ever foremost at His hand."

Forthwith, the jealousies, indignations, and fears which had embittered her adoration for Mrs. X—— were things of the past, and the "secret joy like a bird in her bosom" made everything for a season beautiful and happy. But physically, this state of exaltation was disastrous. As she herself says, "The strain at this moment must have been severe. . . .

Under the excitement of my present rapturous life I lost both my sleep and my appetite, and became as thin as a grasshopper. It was impossible not to see that I was changing; and my sisters were always commenting on my eyes, which they said looked as if they had been picked out by hawks, and put in again by a chimney-sweep; while my face was whiter and leaner than ever. But as I was certainly less violent and less irascible, they were too glad of a change, which was a respite, to fall foul of the cause, whatever it might have been."

And then by degrees the glory of her first content faded, and the old unrest again possessed her. To be with Mrs. X—— was rapture; to be away from her was torture and despair.

"At last the strain grew too intense, and nature gave way. I had a sharp attack of brain fever, when I was for many days in danger. . . . When I recovered I found that the X——'s had left, and no one at Crosthwaite knew where they had gone. Years after, I heard of them as living at ——, where Mrs. X—— was a confirmed invalid and never seen, and Mr. X—— was wholly given up to mesmerism, opium, and poetry."

When she had fully recovered from her severe illness, it seemed impossible to go on living at home.

"I had," she says, "lost all that made life sweet on the outside, and the monotony of existence within was intolerable. If I had had the hope of a settled future and the occupation of preparing for it, things might have been better; but even such lame endeavours after self-education as I had made now failed me, and I seemed to have lost the key to all the holy places of the past, and to have let the fire on the sacred altar burn out.

"I was listless, inert, uninterested. All hope, all joy, all secret ambition of future success, all passionate thrill of living, all delight in books, all intellectual vitality, had gone from me. . . . Everything had gone from me. I could have shrieked for the torture given me by music. I dared not read a poem which was associated with Mrs. X——, and all were associated with her, and the zeal with which I had dug

down into the arid wells of the *Encyclopædia Londinensis*, for that fantastic learning with which I had crammed my brain, had gone with the rest.

"What a wretched time this was to me! I had recovered my life and lost that which had made it beautiful. It was the husk without the kernel, the shell without the pearl; and I was like the Garden when the Lady who had been its Soul had died. I have gone through the fire more than once since then, but I have never had a more painful period than this of that drear, dead winter down among the mountains, after Mrs. X—— had left. . . .

"I went back to that languid acquiescence in doctrines as they are taught, which is neither faith nor voluntary acceptance. It is simply letting things slip and taking no trouble. I had lost, too, my political ardour; and from passion and enthusiasm and turbulence all round had passed into the silence of indifference, the quietude of death."

With the passing of winter and the return of spring, this morbid condition of mind, no doubt largely the result of physical debility, began to pass.

"I gradually got back," she says, "my old feeling of power and invulnerability—my old sense of certainty in the future, and my ability to conquer circumstances and compel happiness, no matter what the obstacles to be overcome. Heart-broken though I might be, I was still master of fate; and I had always the fee-simple of the future.

"Yet as this sense of power returned, so grew ever more masterful that which was its reflex—repugnance to my home-life, and desire to go out into the world on my own account, to work for myself and be independent.

"But how? What could I do? I had learnt nothing thoroughly and nothing useful. . . .

"Then it was that I returned to my old love, Literature—that waste-pipe of unspecialised powers, which no one thinks demands an apprenticeship, and wherein all believe that fame and success are to be caught like wild goats, at a bound!"

She had lately written a short poem which she resolved should be the touchstone of her future.

"At that time," she says, "the two magazines in greatest favour among us youngsters at the vicarage were *Ainsworth's Miscellany* and *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*. My father patronised *Blackwood*, of which some articles were delightful to me and others made me rageful. With the superstition of youthful hope and fear, I determined to do a little bit of private vaticination for my better guidance; and to make the best of a certain number of catches on the point of cup-and-ball determine the magazine to which I should send my poem. I caught forty-nine out of the fifty for Ainsworth, and only forty-seven for Jerrold. To the former, then, I posted my rhymes, with a letter of entreaty which must have amused him by its fervour.

"To my joy he accepted my poem, and sent me a honorarium of two guineas; together with a kind and encouraging letter, assuring me of success if I would persevere, and promising to accept all such work as would suit the *Miscellany*. So now things were plainly ordered, and my future was fair before me."

The verses were entitled "The National Convention of the Gods," and appeared in *Ainsworth's Magazine* in 1845.

This does not seem to have been actually Eliza's first appearance in print, for Mrs. Gedge clearly remembered a set of verses called "The Wreath" accepted by *Bentley's* or *Ainsworth's* before this date. "I shall never forget her delight," she wrote; "she was almost out of her mind with joy."

At any rate, the fates had now decided.

Literature, *i.e.* bread-and-butter-earning literature, was, we must remember, hardly a respectable profession in these early days.

"To write in the quiet dignity of home a learned book like Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, or a profound one like Locke *On the Understanding*, was one thing; to depend for bread on one's pen was another. The one shed increased lustre on the noblest name; the other was no better than fiddling in an orchestra, acting in a barn, or selling yards of silk across a counter, all of which were allied disreputabilities."

At least that was what her father said when she opened

fire on him one day, and propounded to him her notable scheme for leaving home, going to London, and supporting herself by her pen. Then ensued a stormy scene, which ended in his ordering her to leave the room and never to let him hear of such ridiculous rubbish again. That she, a lady and the granddaughter of a bishop, should "write poems for Warren's blacking, or scratch up Bow Street details for a dinner," was nothing less than a degradation.

Of course her high ideals of literature were grossly insulted by such suggestions, and she answered hotly and insolently.

Then there came the traditional parental ultimatum—

"If you go to London, as you propose, you go without my consent, and the curse of God rests on disobedient children to the end of their lives."

Here, then, she was at the cross-roads. In the one direction lay submission to what she felt was her father's unreasonable opposition, in the other the perfecting of her own powers and leading the life for which she was best fitted.

"At this moment," she says, "the two clashed and made my choice very difficult. For underneath the fierce temper which I could not deny, was always conscience and the desire to know the right—and to do it when known."

Finally, personal ambition conquered. The leave which her father would not give she prepared herself to take; and she was on the point of running away from home (for which, by the way, there were various precedents in the family), when, fortunately for all concerned, Mr. William Loaden, the family solicitor, came down from London to pay a visit at the vicarage, and proved the *Deus ex machinâ* by whom all difficulties were arranged.

Mr. Loaden at once took a fancy to the bright, intelligent-looking girl, and demanded a sight of her manuscripts. With ample pride they were brought for his inspection, but with ampler dismay his candid opinions of her sublimest passages and her most high-flown phrases were received.

Finally, however, after sufficient distrust had been expressed and sufficient pain had been inflicted to satisfy

professional dignity, he gave it as his opinion that with care some kind of a vertebrate organism might be evolved out of the protoplastic pulp.

At any rate, there was enough promise to justify Mr. Lynn's giving her a chance of putting to the proof her literary abilities. It was evident that she was doing no good at home. She was too big for the house, too vigorous for the life of a country vicarage. Let her have a year's grace to see what she could do. The question of permanent settlement might come after.

"Mr. Loaden was one of the few people," Mrs. Linton wrote, "who had a decided influence over my father. His sharp, brisk energy; the trenchant audacity of his theories; his worldly knowledge and business capacity; his respect for society, appearances, success; his absolute self-confidence—all naturally impressed a man whose indolence was his bane, and who had to be stirred up if he were to be made to move. And as Mr. Loaden swore by all his gods that his sisters—he was not married—should look after me and keep me out of the destruction into which my father made sure I should run, the thing was at last arranged. My father gave his formal consent to my going up to London for a year for the purpose of studying at the British Museum and writing the book on which I had set my heart. And he agreed to furnish me with the funds necessary for that year's experience.

"'After that,' he said kindly, and yet severely, 'you sink or swim on your own account. If you fail, as I fear you will, you have your home to come back to. It will never be shut against you, unless you disgrace yourself so that you are unfit to enter it. If you succeed—my blessing be with you! It will be a pleasant surprise if you do—but all things are possible to God; and to His care I commend you.'"

So the great step was decided upon, and it was undoubtedly best for everybody that she should go.

"I had," she says, "outgrown the dimensions of the old home; and fission is the law of families as well as of animalculæ. I was the one inharmonious circumstance within the vicarage walls, and all would be better without me. The die

was cast. My choice was made. Selfish, or only self-respecting, I took my place with Mr. Loaden in the coach which was to carry us to the railway station; and thus and for ever broke down my dependence on the old home and set my face towards the Promised Land—the land where I was to find work, fame, liberty, and happiness."

CHAPTER V

EARLY LIFE IN LONDON—1845–1851

THUS it was that the year 1845 found Eliza Lynn, at the age of twenty-three, settled in London. Mr. Loaden, who lived with his brothers and sisters at 28 Bedford Place, had found lodging for her in a small private boarding-house, 35 Montagu Place, close by the entrance to the old reading-room of the British Museum. The present cave of headaches was of course built some years later.

In the then "badly lighted, ill-ventilated, and queerly tenanted old room, with its legendary flea and uncleansed corners," she read daily, gathering material for her *magnum opus*.

Mr. (not till later Sir Antonio) Panizzi, the astute Italian, from whose principal-librarianship may be traced the pre-eminence among European libraries of the printed-books department of the British Museum, was not slow to notice the earnest girl-student who was the first to come and the last to leave. "He had a watchful eye over his small world of readers and officials, and not so much as a mouse squeaked behind the skirting-board but he heard it and tracked the run from end to end."

So it was not surprising that, learning something of the young woman's social position from his friend Mr. Loaden, and seeing how young, unformed, and impulsive she was, he felt himself justified in assuming a quasi-parental and advisory attitude.

In particular, he would appear to have been one day somewhat disturbed by seeing her shake by the hand one of the attendants with whom she had struck up what seemed to

him, considering that she was a bishop's granddaughter, a hardly suitable friendship.

"You are a lady," he said; "he is only a servant. Make him keep his place, and do you maintain your position. These familiarities with low people always end badly. You are very young, and you think that you can revolutionise society. You will find that you cannot; and that if you knock your head against stone walls you will only make it ache and alter nothing."

But he talked to the winds, and the attendant, who had once been a gentleman-farmer in Norfolk, and his delicate little wife continued to be Eliza Lynn's very good friends. So it came to be a habit with her to find them out in their humble home at Stoke Newington on Sunday afternoons. Their simple friendship was a wholesome reward for a week of hard work, and she was not going to relinquish them for a hundred Panizzis.

To the end of her life it was her boast that she counted as good friends amongst fishermen and servants as amongst those born in the purple. It came as natural to her to kiss her dependents as her social equals, and though she sometimes found her easy familiarity presumed upon, she never abandoned the practice. Indeed, when in Italy many years later with her adopted daughter, she showed such free-and-easiness and companionableness with the domestics, that nothing would persuade them that Miss Sichel was not the young lady of fortune, and that Mrs. Linton was her salaried duenna.

Of course Eliza Lynn's chief friends were the Loadens, whose house in Bedford Place, only divided from Montagu Place by a corner of Russell Square, was open to her at all hours.

Her allowance was but just sufficient for her wants, though it was a generous one considering her father's large family and limited income. But close as the squeeze was, she never asked for a penny more. This was with her a strict rule through life, and, as we shall see, there came a short period undreamed of by her family, when she really went

near to starving in Paris, and when her independence allowed her to make no sign.

As matters turned out, the boarding-house in Montagu Place was destined to be her headquarters for the next thirteen years. It will be as well, therefore, to give some idea of this curious microcosm in which she found herself established.

Coming to it as she did with the seeing eye, although in all probability it appeared very humdrum and ordinary to its inhabitants, it was full of colour and variety, and it more than once provided her with "copy" both for books and newspapers.

The house was kept by a Miss Brown, whom she at once nicknamed "Aunt Brownie."

"She had a heart as soft as swansdown and as large as an elephant's. She was totally unfit for any undertaking in which she had to resist encroachments and defend her own rights. Any one could talk her over. She was influenced by her affections more than by her interests; and where she took a liking she would sacrifice her gains to please the favoured him or her by extra liberalities. She had generous instincts, refined tastes, indolent habits; and she kept a loose hand on the domestic reins. Hence she made the most comfortable home possible for those who lived under her hospitable roof. But our comfort was her loss; and when Christmas brought its bills, the two ends gaped ever wider and wider, and were less and less able to be strained together."

And then there were the "extraordinary people who came and went like shadows, or stayed as if they were coeval with the foundations of the house."

There was the bull-necked, bullet-headed *bon-vivant*, who kept the bill of fare up to the mark. There was the dissipated young clerk, who was given over to music-halls and late hours. There was the well-conducted young solicitor—the best of them all. There was the loose-lipped young fellow, who spluttered when he spoke, and asked counsel of the girls whether he should put on his thick trousers or his thinner. There was the uxorious couple who made love in public, and the quarrelsome couple who were just as

embarrassing in their fierce disputes. Then there were the girls—the pretty, tousled, mop-headed ones, who turned the heads of all the men, and had their own loves out of doors; and the earnest ones, who had something else to think about.

One there was of the vanguard of the independent women, who did her life's work without blare or bluster or help from the outside. She was without the weakness of her sex which makes them cry out when they are hustled in the crowd they have voluntarily joined, and which makes them think themselves aggrieved because they are not aided by the men with whom they have put themselves in rivalry. And this one was the brave "Cumberland lassie" with whose life we are concerned.

Then there were "the women of sixty and upwards, who chirped like birds and dressed like brides; the mother and daughter who came no one knew whence, did no one knew what, were pleasant companions and charming entertainers—but kept at a distance; the buxom widows of forty, smiling, *débonnaire*, and ready for their second bridal; and the sad-eyed ones of the same age, whose weepers were as big as sails, and their crape of phenomenal depth and blackness. There were the half-crazed members of well-known families, planted out to insure that peace at home which their odd ways disturbed; and sometimes there were people whose antecedents would not bear scrutiny, and whose dismissal had to be summarily given."

Such was the strange menagerie in which Eliza Lynn found herself on her first independent entrance into the world. To Miss Brown, who, save her old nurse, was more of a mother to her than any woman she ever knew, she always remained devotedly attached.

By the end of the covenanted term she had accomplished her purpose and written her novel. Its title was *Azeth, the Egyptian.* The story had been begun at Crosthwaite, and was founded upon information gleaned from *The London Encyclopædia* and Moore's *Epicurean.* This information she supplemented by a careful study at the British Museum of

Sir John Gardner Wilkinson's works on Egyptian Antiquities, and with their aid she completed her ambitious task. The book was finished in 1846, and published in the same year by Mr. Newby at her expense. The necessary fifty pounds was advanced by Mr. Loaden, and duly repaid.

Wonderful to relate, the *Times* at once reviewed the book most favourably, and one paper was so unstinting of praise that it declared the "concluding pages" to be "equal to anything in the *Antigone* of Sophocles!" But those were the days when a reviewer prided himself upon his scholarship, and had at least to assume an intimacy with the classics.

It was, of course, the *Times* review that lifted her into the seventh heaven of rapture. This is her own account of her feelings:—

"I seemed to tread on air, to walk in a cloud of light, to bear on me a sign of strange and glorious significance. I felt as if I must have stopped the passers-by to shake hands with them and tell them it was I who had written the novel which the *Times* had reviewed so well that morning. I thought all the world must be talking of it, and wondering who was the unknown Eliza Lynn who, yesterday obscure, to-day famous, had so suddenly flashed into the world of letters; and I longed to say that this veiled prophet, this successful aspirant, was I! I remember the sunset as I went up Oxford Street, to what was not yet the Marble Arch. For I could not rest in the house. I could not even go home to dinner. I felt compelled to walk as if for ever—not like that poor wretch, for penance, over a dreary and interminable plain, but through an enchanted garden of infinite beauty. To damp down the glad fever in my veins, I could only breathe out in the open. I should have been stifled within the four walls of that house in Montagu Place.

"Since then I have watched with breathless emotion the opalescent skies of Venice; the westering light which streams like visible prayer through the windows of St. Peter's as you stand on the Pincio; the gorgeous sunsets of Naples, with that burning bar drawn all across the horizon, stretching from Vesuvius to infinitude; but I have never seen one to

match the splendour of that sunset in London, on the evening of the day when I first achieved success. For the moment I was as a god among gods. My veins were filled with celestial ichor, not human blood; and my mind saw what it brought—the infinity of glory because of that intensity of joy.

"I turned into the Park and sat down on a bench, looking at this resplendence which was to me like a message—a symbol of my own strength and future lustre."

And there she sat until a park-keeper, laying his hand on her shoulder, assumed the rôle of the angel with the flaming sword, and turned her unceremoniously out of paradise.

The following note referring to her appearance at this period, kindly contributed by Captain F. Fox, will be read with interest.

"Miss Lynn came occasionally to visit us when we were living at Stamford Hill in 1846–47.

"My mother took a great fancy to her, and they became intimate friends. . . .

"In appearance, Miss Lynn at that time was slight and graceful in figure, not very tall, with an oval face wearing generally a reserved and rather grave look. I cannot recall the colour of her eyes, but I know she wore spectacles, which probably made her look more serious than she would naturally. She appeared to me to be about six or seven and twenty years of age, but she might have been younger."

Mrs. Bridell-Fox also says—

"As an artist I was charmed with Miss Lynn's appearance—the pure oval of her face, her delicate and regular features—and also with the low musical voice and exquisitely distinct enunciation."

The following letter written to Mrs. Bridell-Fox's mother about this time explains itself.

ELIZA LYNN TO MRS. FOX (wife of Mr. W. J. Fox, M.P. for Oldham).

"MY DEAR MRS. FOX,—Your kind fears about me are *physically* false, but what truth they may have mentally and morally I am afraid to think of. The unexpected success of

Azeth, and the flatteries and congratulations I hear everywhere, the being made a full-grown live lion of, the reviews, and my own hopes, are almost turning my head. No, but seriously, I bore it all very well until Monday, when four unexpected favourable notices came to light, and as I went to the Museum yesterday I was congratulated, and at a party last night made a great fuss with, and I am fearful lest I should get vain. But oh, I would give up all my success rather than do this! My prayer is against all conceit. But just the first flush of triumph is rather too pleasant, like sugar-plums which spoil one's teeth and vitiate one's taste.

"Many thanks for your dear, kind words of interest. The approbation of a *friend* is dearer than even a public and printed review."

When her money was exhausted and her year in London was up, Eliza returned home; but the life which was not large enough for the untried girl was certainly too narrow for the full-fledged authoress, who was more in love with liberty than ever.

With some difficulty she again obtained her father's consent to her returning to London, and although without cordial approval of the plan, he finally agreed to provide £30 a year towards her expenses.

She had in the meantime produced her second novel, *Amymone*, dealing with the age of Pericles. This she dedicated to her father. It was sold to Mr. Bentley for £100, and was published in 1848. It proved of threefold importance. First, it roused the enthusiasm of Walter Savage Landor, by whom a favourable review in the *Examiner* is generally supposed to have been written. Secondly, it brought her into touch with Mr. George Bentley, with whom a lifelong personal and business friendship ensued. Thirdly, as we shall immediately see, it greatly impressed an editor who was second to none but Delane in his gift for recognising journalistic talent.

Back in Montagu Place, the next point was to discover some means of turning her literary powers to remunerative account. Newspaper work was the first calling to suggest itself, and forthwith down she sat, determined to flesh her

journalistic pen. The outcome was a social essay (no doubt founded on second-hand information obtained at the British Museum) on the wrongs of all savage aborigines. This she despatched to the office of the *Morning Chronicle* as a sample of what she could do, together with a letter asking for employment.

Then came four days of "restlessness amounting to agony"—of feverish alternations between hope and fear. On the fifth a proof lay on her plate at breakfast, and with it a letter bidding her go down to the office that very day at four precisely.

The *Morning Chronicle* had lately been bought by the Peelite party, who had placed John Douglas Cook in the editorial chair. Though not possessed of much literary ability himself, he had a singular instinct, says *The Dictionary of National Biography*, for recognising ability in others and judgment in directing them.

As may be imagined, the young aspirant was up to time.

This is her description of the momentous interview:—

"I was punctual to the moment, and with a beating heart but very high head went swinging up the narrow, dingy court into which the 'editor's entrance' gave; and then up the still narrower and still dingier stairs to a room whence I could not see the street for the dirt which made the windows as opaque as ground glass. Here I was told to wait till Mr. Cook could see me. In about half an hour the messenger returned, and ushered me into the awful presence.

"For in truth it was an awful presence, in more ways than one. It was not only my hope and present fortune, but of itself, personally, it was formidable.

"A tall, cleanly shaved, powerfully built man, with a smooth head of scanty red hair; a mobile face instinct with passion; fiery, reddish hazel eyes; a look of supreme command; an air of ever-vibrating impatience and irascibility, and an abrupt but not unkindly manner, standing with his back to the fireplace, made half a step forward and held out his hand to me as I went into the room.

"'So! you are the little girl who has written that queer

book, and want to be one of the press-gang, are you?' he said, half smiling, and speaking in a jerky and unprepared manner, both singular and reassuring.

"I took him in his humour, and smiled too.

"'Yes, I am the woman,' I said.

"'Woman, you call yourself? I call you a whipper-snapper,' he answered, always good-humouredly. 'But you seem to have something in you. We'll soon find it out if you have. I say, though, youngster, you never wrote all that rubbish yourself! Some of your brothers helped you. You never scratched all those queer classics and mythology into your own numskull without help. At your age it is impossible.'

"'It may be impossible,' I laughed; 'at the same time it is true. I give you my word, no one helped me. No one even saw the manuscript or the proofs,' I added eagerly.

"On which my new friend and potential master startled me as much as if he had fired off a pistol in my ear, first by his laughter, and then by the volley of oaths which he rolled out—oaths of the strangest compounds and oddest meanings to be heard anywhere—oaths which he himself made at the moment, having a speciality that way unsurpassed, unsurpassable, and inimitable. But as he laughed while he blasphemed, and called me 'good girl' in the midst of his wonderful expletives, he evidently did not mean mischief. And I had fortunately enough sense to understand his want of malice, and to accept his manner as of the ordinary course of things.

"This pleased him, and after he had exhausted his momentary stock of oaths he clapped me on the back with the force of a friendly sledge-hammer, and said—

"'You are a nice kind of little girl, and I think you'll do.'

"Then he told me to go into the next room to write a leader on a Blue Book which he would send in to me. It was the report of the Parliamentary Commission on the condition of the miners relative to the 'truck' system.

"'I give you three hours and a half,' he said, taking out his watch. 'Not a minute longer, by ——. By that time

your work must be done, or you'll have no supper to-night! You must take the side of the men; but—d'ye hear?—you are not to assassinate the masters. Leave them a leg to stand on, and don't make Adam Smith turn in his grave by any cursed theories smacking of socialism and the devil knows what. Do you understand, young woman? I have had the passages marked which you are to notice, and so you need not bother that silly cocoanut of yours with any others. Keep to the text; write with strength; and don't talk nonsense. And now be off.'

"To my great joy and supreme good luck, I seized the spirit of my instructions, and wrote a rattling, vigorous kind of paper, which pleased Mr. Cook so much that he called me a good girl twenty times with as many different oaths, and took me home to dine with him. And from that day he put me on the staff of the paper, and my bread and butter was secure."

For the next two years she "filled the office of handy man about the paper—was now sent down to describe a fête; now given a pile of books to review; sometimes set to do the work of the theatrical critic when this gentleman was away; and given certain social leaders to write—but never political."

Thus she gained the distinction of being the first woman newspaper writer to draw a fixed salary. She was not, as has been stated erroneously, the first woman newspaper writer; for Miss Martineau, Mrs. Norton, and Mrs. Grote certainly preceded her, and there may have been others.

She had now enough to live upon, and was supremely happy. Once or twice she got the paper into trouble because of her "unsound political economy and the trail of the socialistic serpent, which made itself too visible" even for the Peelite following. But she was a favourite with the irascible editor, and her sins were forgiven.

All the employés of the journal did not come off so well as she did. Some ran rough risks when hot water was about—as for instance that poor fellow who brought in either a wrong or an unpleasant message, and whom the

editor served as Luther served the devil. "The man ducked in time; but the door was cut and indented where the sharp edge had struck, and blackened by a stream of ink from the centre panel to the floor. Mr. Cook showed me the place with a peal of laughter and a volley of oaths, in nowise disconcerted by this narrow escape from committing murder. He made it up to the man with a couple of sovereigns, and when the door had been scraped and revarnished, no more was heard of the matter. The men in the office were used to his ways, and dodged him when he let fly—waiting till the dangerous fit was over. All forgave his violence—some because they really loved him, and some because he paid them handsomely for their bruises."

Miss Lynn had now her private sitting-room at Miss Brown's, in which she wrote all the morning. It was in these days that she adopted those methodical habits which clung to her all her days. Not that her work was over by midday. Indeed, Mrs. Berridge, a niece of Miss Brown's, tells me that she would often have to hurry from her dinner to satisfy the demands of the printer's devil who sat in the hall.

Her regular salary on the *Chronicle* was twenty guineas a month, in return for which her tale of work was six long articles, mainly on social matters. In addition to these, she wrote book reviews, for which she received something more. From an old account-book I find that from August 1849 to February 1851 she furnished eighty miscellaneous articles and thirty-six reviews. Her income, therefore, from this source alone, was certainly not less than £250 a year.

Early in 1851 trouble came between Miss Lynn and her editor, when he so far forgot himself as to shake his fist in her face. This day saw the last of her visits to the office, and after April the *Chronicle* knew her no more. Later, as we shall see, when Cook became editor of the *Saturday Review*, business relations were resumed, but the rift in their friendship was never closed.

"All the same," she writes years after, "he had his grand, good points. He was generous and affectionate; utterly devoid of all treacherous instincts; and he bore no malice.

He was brutal, if you will; but the core of him was sound, and his fidelity to his friends was very beautiful. With so much that can be said less than laudatory of this fierce Boanerges of the press, it is pleasant to record that which makes for his renown and claims our more tender memories."

It was whilst under Miss Brown's roof, but probably a few years later, that Miss Lynn was presented at Court by her friend Mrs. Milner-Gibson, of whom we shall hear more presently. Mrs. Berridge well remembers the amusement caused by her practising her curtseys with a long shawl pinned round her for a train, as she was terrified lest, with her short sight, she might when in the royal presence make herself ridiculous. Mrs. Berridge also remembers her being visited by her father, "a fine, noble-looking man," and her sisters, from which we see that she was in no sense an outcast from her family. Indeed, her bi-annual visits paid to the old home were pleasant to all. The "mutual affection was strengthened, not weakened, by the loosening of the links and lengthening of the chain."

Other visitors were Mr. Frank Beard, her friend and doctor, and Miss Cushman, the American actress, "with a box ticket to see her act with Macready at the Princess's Theatre."

Notwithstanding her exacting work on the *Chronicle*, she found time to write a third novel, *Realities*, dedicated to Walter Savage Landor, and published in 1851. In addition to this we find her making sporadic contributions to *Chambers' Journal* and *Chambers' Miscellany of Tracts*, amongst which may be mentioned "A Picnic to Watendlath,"[1] published in the former, and "Grace Ayton" and "Maud the

[1] It is worthy of mention that this little study of Cumberland scenery bore substantial fruit no less than half a century later. As treasurer of the Lynn Linton Memorial Fund, it was a great pleasure to me to receive from Dr. C. J. Cullingworth, ex-President of the Obstetrical Society of London and the author of many well-known medical works, a letter enclosing a contribution and expressing his gratitude for the opportunity thus offered him of "acknowledging, however inadequately, his personal indebtedness to Mrs. Linton for the pleasure which he had derived from the modest article so many years before." It is not often that an author at such an interval receives so pretty an acknowledgment from a perfect stranger.

Sorceress" in the latter. In the early fifties, too, she contributed several articles to the *Daily News.*

The year after the publication of her third novel she made her first visit to Italy, with Mr. Loaden. This lasted for three months.[1] At Strasburg she is much struck by two mummies preserved in the Protestant Church of St. Thomas. "A father and his daughter fourteen years old, dressed in the costume of the time, four hundred years ago. They are curious and saddening. He is preserved the best—his face varnished. She is a mere skeleton—with faded ends of former flowers on her breast, artificial flowers on her sleeves and in her hair, and with gold and jewels and rich point lace. Her dress is light blue silk, her ribbons gauzy and discoloured; her hands like a child's, her face a death's head. Ah! these things make one reflect."

Between Schaffhausen and Zurich "we passed through many beautiful little villages, and in one saw the whole population, ranged according to age and sex, marching in procession headed by the banners and priests of the Church, all praying for fine weather. Something—perhaps it was association — touched me very deeply. I could scarcely command my tears, superstitious though it was, yet the deep piety and large influence that commanded the procession were something grand."

At Zurich she was amused at "a sneeze being met with a movement of the hat and a blessing."

From Lucerne "she had a camel of a horse up the Righi, which carried her up the steep places like a storm."

At Milan they "underwent a severe scrutiny at the gate. They seemed to think — these Austrian brutes — that we might be smuggled Mazzinis."

At Como they hired a boat for a *promenade sur l'eau*, but were terrified by the crew. "Such a villainous-looking set never got together. They looked as if murder and robbery would have been gingerbread and nuts to them."

At Venice she writes, "There is a breadth and heroic grandeur about the place that is more like the realisation

[1] The following notes are from a diary kept at the time.

of all one's ideas of nobleness than anything I have seen yet. It has the dignity of a Roman senator. The whole architecture of the place is a series of miracles. . . . The Duomo is a wonder of richness—the whole scene is more the perfect ideal of grandeur, majesty, dignity, and power than I thought dumb stones could express. . . . Nothing has been exaggerated of the place. All was as grand and as glorious and fairylike as people have said. I stood outside, and dreamt standing."

After a week, in which they "saw everything," they moved on to Padua. Here she was much put about by the way in which she considered Titian had wasted his precious time in depicting the grotesque miracles of St. Anthony in the frescoes of the Scuola. Here, too, they saw "the most curious work in marble the world holds. Sixteen devils are trying to get up to an angel, who throws them down. The devils are in every attitude imaginable, and some of them seem supported by nothing. How the man ever worked them in as he did no one knows. Canova said when he saw it that he had worked at devils, but he must have been a greater devil himself to have been able to have done this."

At Turin they "detected an English servant at dinner passing off for a gentleman."

On the 3rd of October they left Nice and crossed the then frontier into France. "We are now Louis Napoleon's subjects. I was very much disgusted, but what could I do? The baggage was searched—gently, and nothing went wrong. For this I felt rather grateful to the red-legged scoundrels."

At Arles "went to Pierreux. . . . The gardens are large and handsome — French — but delightful as heaven after Marseilles. The smell of the earth, the leaves, and the flowers make up a kind of paradise to noses saturated with all the foulness of the towns."

At Dijon she went over the town alone. "Had an adventure (with a young man) in the railway carriage—but told Mr. Loaden all the next day, not liking to deceive him."

"Arrived in Paris on the 27th October, and home on the 28th."

CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL LIFE AND FRIENDSHIPS IN THE "FIFTIES"

"AT this time," she says, "I went much into society. My social place was that which naturally belongs to a young woman of good birth, who, if she has not quite won her spurs, may yet some day do great things—who knows?—and who has good names at her back. The tower of strength my grandfather the bishop and my uncle the dean were to me! What humiliating snobs we are! I became acquainted with a few of the leaders of thought already established, and some who were still preparing for the time when they too should lead and no longer follow."

Then she goes on to speak of Thornton Hunt, whom she looked upon as "a chivalrous, true, perfectly sincere and unselfish man," admitting that he was "irregular," but maintaining with vehemence that he was "not licentious." She often in later years used unmeasured language to me concerning what she considered the scandalous injustice meted out to him by a world which made itself ridiculous not only by condonation, but by sycophantic approval of the misconduct of others.

He was, of course, a member of that curious "family Agapemone," of which so much has been written, and which had its quarters in Queen's Road, Bayswater.

"At the time when I first knew these people," she writes, "they were living in a kind of family communion that was very remarkable. Sisters and cousins and brothers—some of the women married and with yearly increasing families, to which they devoted themselves; others single and of general domestic utility all round. Among them were some who

practised no divergence in their own lives, and allowed of none in theory: such as Samuel Laurence,[1] who was then vainly giving his strength to discover the Venetian method of colouring; and that handsome Egyptologist, George Gliddon, who might have thrown his handkerchief where he would, but who was true to his first love (his cousin Anne), and married her when her youth and beauty had long since gone, and only her truth and her lovely nature remained."

Here, too, she met, amongst others, Robert Owen, Frank Stone, Edward Pigott, Mrs. Milner-Gibson, and Amelia Edwards. Other notabilities with whom about this time she came in contact, and with some of whom she was on familiar terms, were Miss Jane Porter, Miss Pardoe, Mrs. Schimmelpenninck, Mrs. Trollope, Lady Morgan, Harrison Ainsworth, Alaric Watts, and Shirley Brooks.

Some particulars of these early London acquaintanceships may be found in a volume lately published by Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton, entitled *Reminiscences of Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, etc.*, by Mrs. Lynn Linton.

It will be gathered from what has gone before, that Eliza Lynn was now brought into contact, amongst others, with a set of persons who arrogated the right of being a law unto themselves, and with whom freedom of discussion was carried to its utmost limits.

Those who care to turn to the pages of *Christopher Kirkland* will there find the account of an imaginary character, Mrs. Hulme. I have Mrs. Linton's own authority for saying that, although the intellectual part of that representation is fiction, the personality is that of an old acquaintance of the Lynns, at Rochester, who had now settled in London. There is no need to mention her real name, as Mrs. Linton merely used her as a convenient mouthpiece for the discussion of opinions which were rife in her circle at that period, and which she did not wish unduly to emphasise as her own. They are in the main such subjects as are familiar to every

[1] Laurence was the only person she knew besides the Loadens on coming up to London. She had met him at her father's house. There are portraits in existence of Eliza and her sisters done by him.

one who has used his intellectual muscles to kick over the formularies by which he has been surrounded in youth, for the purpose of seeing how they are propped up from behind.

These familiar and somewhat unedifying discussions I shall not resuscitate. They can be turned to by any who find enjoyment in making themselves uncomfortable. How far Eliza Lynn herself endorsed them, or whether she merely meant to show that such inquiries were in the air at this time, and so were exercising her and resulting in mental unrest, it is impossible to say. The important point is, that she was passing through another speculative phase which was to carry her still farther away from the beliefs and, in some cases, the prejudices of her upbringing.

From this time "euthanasia" and other such matters of discretionary morality were freely and constantly discussed. But that she did not by any means unreservedly subscribe to the tenets of these mental revolutionists, is, I think, evident. Happily for her, there was so much cynicism exhibited upon subjects which she approached with the utmost earnestness, that she was rather repelled than attracted. Doubtless she found these subversive doctrines dangerously interesting, and was flattered at her inclusion in their discussion by her elders. At the same time, there were many of them of which she heartily disapproved, and which she as boldly repudiated.

Her religion of Humanity kept her through life intolerant of lying and deceit, of selfishness, treachery, unchastity, and the rest; whereas, such a philosophy as that with which she was now made acquainted, founded as it was upon contempt for the human race, tolerated its vices because it expected nothing better.

She herself often in after years marvelled how her belief in goodness and right, unsupported as it was by religion, survived the onslaughts of this time. Fortunately for her, and for us who loved her, she never lost faith in her kind. Man never became to her a merely irresponsible animal without conscience, love, aspiration, and truth.

Fortunately, too, there were other friendships which Eliza

Lynn had by this time formed, and chiefest among these was that with Walter Savage Landor.

She first met Byron's "deep-mouth'd Bœotian" in 1847, when he was seventy-three years of age and she was twenty-five. Writing in *Fraser's Magazine* for July 1870, she says, "Long before this I had learnt his *Imaginary Conversations* by heart, and was his enthusiastic admirer, without knowing whether the author was dead or alive, or where he lived, or, in fact, anything about him. I was visiting Dr. Brabant[1] in Bath, and we were at Mr. Empson's 'old curiosity shop,' when we saw what seemed a noble-looking old man, badly dressed in shabby snuff-coloured clothes, a dirty old blue necktie, unstarched cotton shirt—with a front more like a nightgown than a shirt—and 'knubbly' apple-pie boots. But underneath the rusty old hat-brim gleamed a pair of quiet and penetrating grey-blue eyes; the voice was sweet and masterly; the manner that of a man of rare distinction. Dr. Brabant spoke to him, and his sister, Miss Hughes, whispered to me, 'That is Mr. Landor.' I was taken by surprise. Here stood in the flesh one of my great spiritual masters; one of my most revered intellectual guides. I remember how the blood came into my face as I dashed up to him with both hands held out, and said, 'Mr. Landor? oh! is this Mr. Landor?' as if he had been a god suddenly revealed. And I remember the amused smile with which he took both my hands in his, and said, 'And who is this little girl, I wonder?' From that hour we were friends: and I thank God I can say truthfully, that never for one hour, one moment, afterwards were we anything else. For twelve long, dear years, we were father and daughter. We never called each other anything else. He never signed himself to me, or wrote to me, as anything else; and in the last sad clouded days of his life, had not the circumstances of my own life been so changed as to render it impossible, I would have gone with him to Italy, and I would not have left him again while

[1] My friend Mr. H. A. Acworth tells me that Mrs. Linton assured him that Dr. Brabant was the original of Casaubon in *Middlemarch*. This is interesting in view of the fact that Casaubon has generally been identified with Mark Pattison.

he lived. But if the circumstances of my life had not been so changed, and I had still been able to visit him, and make his lodgings his home, as in olden times, he would never have needed to have gone back to Italy. Of this I am sorrowfully convinced. I could have kept him from the pain and misery that overtook him."

After this first meeting, until ten years later, when the "old Roman" had to fly into exile from the consequences of a miserable and compromising quarrel, Eliza Lynn used to stay with him in Bath for many weeks at a time, sometimes once and sometimes twice in the year. Even when she visited other friends in the city, which was always to her the "beautiful and beloved," she made it her duty to go daily to his house punctually at twelve o'clock, and sit or walk with him till two, when he dined. She also dined with him regularly twice a week, when he always took care to give her some favourite dish, "and especially to have a bottle of his famous Malmsey Madeira on the table."

Once, in the early days of their friendship, she says, "We had gone out for a walk to Lansdowne Crescent, for the sake of the view thence—one of his favourite points—and when we came back, Pomero (his dog), who had accompanied us for a short time, and had then turned as we supposed to go home, was not to be found. I shall never forget the padrone's mingled rage and despair. He would not eat any dinner, and I remember how that it was a dinner of turbot and stewed hare, which he himself had seasoned and prepared with wine, etc., in the little sitting-room; for he was a good cook in that way, and to that extent. And both of these were favourite dishes with him. But he would not eat, and sat in his high-backed chair, which was not an easy one, or stamped about the room in a state of stormy sorrow, like nothing I had ever seen before, though I saw more than one like tempest afterwards. Now he was sure the dog was murdered, and he should never see him again; some scoundrel had murdered him out of spite and cruelty, or to make a few pounds by him stuffed, and there was no use in thinking more about him; then he would go out and scour

all Bath for him; then he would offer rewards—wild rewards —a hundred pounds—his whole fortune—if any one would bring him back alive; after which he would give way to his grief and indignation again, and by way of turning the knife in his wound would detail every circumstance of the dog's being kidnapped, struck, pelted with stones, and tortured in some stable or cellar, and finally killed outright, as if he had been present at the scene. But in a short time, after the whole city had been put into an uproar, and several worthy people made exceedingly unhappy, the little fellow was brought back as pert and vociferous as ever; and yelped out *mea culpa* on his master's knee, in between the mingled scolding and caressing with which he was received."

This was the man all over, and yet, notwithstanding his impatience and irascibility and his young friend's natural indocility, to the surprise of every one the curiously assorted couple got on together in perfect accord. Indeed, we have it on her own authority that his temper, notoriously "short in tether and leonine in wrath," was never once ruffled during the whole of their thirteen years of close and constant friendship. Of course she never presumed to oppose, or the upshot would have been different. The result was that she always looked back on these visits as her most valuable lessons in self-control.

Landor was of the utmost use to the young authoress in developing her style; and more particularly indoctrinated her with an enduring horror of slang. *À propos* of which, we may imagine how the following brief conversation with a certain American of her acquaintance touched her.

"The subject was an underhung, wriggling terrier pup—

"'My!' said this old lady, looking curiously at the dog. 'Why, it's wopper-jawed!'

"'Wopper-jawed? What's that?' I asked.

"'Why, don't you know?—like a wiggler!'

"'But what is a wiggler?' I asked again.

"'Oh my! Not know!—du tell! A wopper-jawed wiggler —just like a pollywog out of a hydrant!'"

She used to say that she never met with any one whose

advice was more carefully considered from the point of view of the recipient than was Landor's. He was no mere headstrong and unthinking literary despot, but a wise and judicious counsellor, who often even went so far as to advise her to abide in the old way which he himself had abandoned. What was appropriate to a past master in the art would be affectation in a novice, and he no more insisted on her adoption of his special views on orthography and diction than on her pronunciation in his manner of "woonderful," "goolden," "woorld," "srimp," "yaller," "laylock," and the like.

It is pleasant to think of the great happiness brought into the old man's life by the devoted appreciation of his young disciple. What happy content there was in those long winter evenings, when the master would read to her sometimes for two hours at a stretch from one of the marvellously few books that he kept by him, whilst she netted with gold thread and bright silks, in the shine and colour of which he found such undisguised delight. Then he would break off and read his own poems in that deep, rich, musical voice of his, with the small inartificial quiver in it when he came to the more touching passages.

She was staying with him when he wrote that lovely quatrain which he afterwards placed as a prefix to his *Last Fruit off an Old Tree*—

> I strove with none, for none was worth my strife;
> Nature I loved, and next to Nature, Art:
> I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
> It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

This was on the morning after the anniversary of his seventy-fifth birthday. At breakfast he would not touch his food until he had scrawled off the lines. Then he read them with "such exquisite pathos, such touching dignity and manly resignation," that she fell to weeping.

Writing of him at this time, she says, "He was always losing and overlooking, and then the tumult that would arise was something too absurd, considering the occasion. He used to stick a letter into a book: then, when he wanted

to answer it, it was gone—and someone had taken it—the only letter he wanted to answer—that he would rather have forfeited a thousand pounds than have lost, and so on. Or he used to push his spectacles up over his forehead, and then declare they were lost, lost for ever. He would ramp and rave about the room at such times as these, upsetting everything that came in his way, declaring that he was the most unfortunate man in the woorld, or the greatest fool, or the most inhumanly persecuted. I would persuade him to sit down and let me look for the lost property; when he would sigh in deep despair, and say there was no use in taking any more trouble about it, it was gone for ever. When I found it, as of course I always did, he would say 'thank you' as quietly and naturally as if he had not been raving like a maniac half a minute before."

Regarding his want of the critical faculty, so far as pictures were concerned, she used to relate the following anecdote:—

"He was always buying 'for the last time' the most abominable rubbish possible. He used to get for half a crown 'old masters' that he would sell for as many hundreds as he had given pence! He gave me once a 'study in brown,' a landscape, so far as one can make it out at all, which he really taught himself to believe was the 'only landscape Rembrandt ever painted.'

"With a strong imagination, you can make out in this picture something that may be the roof of a house; something that may be a boat; also a pale brown dab that might mean the first idea of a statue; and a strip that you may, if you please, believe to be a river. Well, the story was this, as dear old Mr. Landor made it up, and repeated till he believed. Rembrandt was out one day on the river. It came on to rain; he had no canvas with him, so he went into the farmhouse—roof indicated—in the garden of which stood the statue—the first idea sketched—and asked the good woman for a piece of cloth whereon to paint. She had none handy, but tore off a piece of her gown and gave it to him. Hence the sketch, which he bought for two-and-sixpence and gave to me."

In his will Landor left her some really good pictures. Browning, who was Landor's executor, requested her, on the ground that the pictures were of considerable value, to waive her claim on behalf of Mrs. Landor and a daughter, who were left badly off. Mrs. Linton most generously acceded to what certainly seems an extraordinary request. From that day to the day of her death she received neither thanks nor any intimation as to the destination of the pictures, notwithstanding the fact that she wrote repeatedly to Browning on the subject.

The following quotation from a letter published in Mr. Stephen Wheeler's *Letters of Walter Savage Landor* is eloquent of the old man's appreciation of their friendship.

W. S. LANDOR TO Mrs. GRAVES-SAWLE.

7th May 1849.

" . . . Eliza Lynn comes to see me on Saturday. What a charm it is even at the close of life to be cared for by the beautiful and gentle, and to see them come out from the warm sunshine and the sweet flowers toward us in the chilliness of our resting-place. This is charity, the charity of the Graces. They are fond of walking where Love has walked before, although they are certain they shall not find him there again."

His high opinion of his young friend's literary talent may be gathered from the terms in which he dedicated to her the "Five Scenes," published in 1853, at the end of the *Last Fruit off an Old Tree* mentioned above. It is too long to quote here in full. The last four lines must serve[1]—

> Meanwhile let some one tell the world thy worth,
> One whom the world shall listen to, one great
> Above his fellows, nor much lower than thou:
> He who can crown stands very near the crown'd.

In the same volume he included his "Epistle to Eliza Lynn," on her *Amymone*, first published in the *Examiner*

[1] For the whole of this poem, and of that from which the next quotation is taken, see Appendix B.

for 22nd July 1848. After enumerating the "high names, immortal names," borne by women, he concludes—

> In our days, so sweet,
> So potent, so diversified, is none
> As thine, Protectress of Aspasia's fame,
> Thine, golden shield of matchless Pericles,
> Pure heart and lofty soul, Eliza Lynn.

As we proceed chronologically we shall come across letters from Landor chiefly written in exile. Apart from their intrinsic interest, they will go far to repair what was undoubtedly an act of great injustice done by John Forster to the subject of this memoir. To dismiss in his biography a friendship such as we have indicated, and of which still ampler evidence will appear later on, in the space of a single sentence, was in itself inexcusable; but if we hold, as doubtless Mrs. Linton held, and I believe had good grounds for holding, that the omission was the deliberate outcome of jealousy, the matter assumes the dimensions of an outrage.

We shall see later on what revenge Mrs. Linton took, and how she involved herself thereby with another of Forster's heroes, Charles Dickens.

Returning for a moment to the early years of their friendship, it should be said that, in one of these, Landor gave her a whole season of balls in Bath, chaperoning her as if he had been her real father. These were perhaps the happiest moments of her life. Writing to me forty years later, she says, "Half my real life lies in Bath, and I never hear the word without a sensation."

Other friends in the western city were Dr. Brabant, mentioned above; his wife and sister-in-law; Mr. Empson, "the pre-historic æsthete . . . whose *bric-à-brac* shop was a favourite lounge with the best people in Bath," and hallowed in Eliza Lynn's eyes as her first meeting-place with Landor; and the wife and daughters of the ill-fated actor Power, who went down in the *President*.

Another there was of whom it is somewhat difficult to speak, seeing that there are those now living who were bound to him by the closest of domestic ties. It would be

indiscreet to mention his name, and I shall do no more than indicate his identity, for the sake of those who knew Mrs. Linton best. He was the "Brother Edward" of whom she spoke through life as "one of those who make the honour of their generation, and who help to keep society sweet and pure, because entirely governed by principle."

He it was who stirred in her the one great passion of her life, and although circumstances made their union impossible, their correspondence by letter never ceased until his death, some few months before that of Mrs. Linton herself. Then only the forty years' romance came to an end.

The bar to their marriage lay in the fact that he was a Roman Catholic and she was at least a confessed Agnostic. He was deeply religious; she was "notoriously unanchored." Do what his director would—for she submitted to the efforts made towards her conversion—she was never, she herself has said, stirred a hair's breadth. Though she should lose all, she could not command belief in what seemed to her mere fables from beginning to end—and even against love she must be faithful to truth.

This is no mere hyperbole. Eliza Lynn's crowning characteristic was intractability. She was incapable of accepting aught but what commended itself to her own judgment. Authority was of no value in her eyes, save where she had no opportunity of making her own investigation. To quote Mr. Anthony Hope Hawkins in another connection, "with her the acid of doubt bit into every axiom."

Of course many thought her wilful, but if so, it was surely wilfulness inconceivable which could make her surrender the man whom she loved, and who loved her, just for the sake of a meaningless obstinacy. And for him, a devout Roman Catholic, there was of course no marrying without the Church's consent.

This condition of things continued for as long as five or six years, during which time they met at intervals, only to find themselves, as far as convictions were concerned, drifting farther and farther apart. Then came the final scene, when he made a last despairing effort to win her over; but she could

not forswear herself. And then the realisation of love, in the sense of total self-abandonment, went out of her life for good and all.

More need not be said. So much was necessary to clear the ground for the marriage, more or less of convenience, which she was to contract later on.

Of other notabilities, prospective and otherwise, with whom she rubbed shoulders in London in those days, some, as we shall see, to become factors in her later life, were Mr. Herbert Spencer; William Smith, or "Thorndale," as he used to be called; Robert Owen, the social reformer, of whom she said, "I became his ardent convert, and had there been a 'phalanstery' founded on philosophical principles I would have gone into it"; Charles Bray; Edward Pigott; Froude, "one of our best if most prejudiced historians, master of style and eloquent devil's advocate"; Lady Franklin; Mrs. Gaskell, "with her beautiful white arms bare to the shoulder, and as destitute of bracelets as her hands were of gloves"; Carlyle; and Emerson.

At the house of Mrs. Milner-Gibson, of whose table-turning séances more will be said later, she met Mazzini, Louis Blanc, Kossuth, Klapka, and the Scalias.

About this time, too, she made acquaintance with the Stricklands, of whom she writes, "Agnes, with her ringlets and look of faded prettiness, accepting homage as one who had been used to it all her life; Elizabeth, sturdy, plain, devoted, self-effacing, the one who did the real work while giving to her sister all the honour. She lived only for that sister's pleasure and in her success; and she really idolised her. I shall never forget my own surprise when one day she turned to me, with a look of supreme devotion on her good, plain, hard-featured face, and said—every word like a caress —'How pretty Agnes looks to-day!'"

Other houses at which she was a welcome guest were those of Sir Charles Babbage and Sergeant Talfourd. Of the latter she says, "I remember how he kept up the traditions of the then past generation, and came into the drawing-room with a thick speech and unsteady legs."

I have been thus particular in grouping together the notable persons with whom Eliza Lynn was more or less on terms of intimacy, for the purpose of putting her early years as an authoress in their proper setting. From which it will be seen that not only was she in touch with all that was mentally stimulating, but she also moved in a society befitting her social condition. In some cases I have of course slightly anticipated, but her surroundings during the "fifties" are here fairly represented. Afterwards, during the years of her marriage, there is little doubt that those of her acquaintances who laid undue stress on class distinctions were not so cordial. Later on, however, when she renewed her independent life, these fastidious persons were ready enough to welcome her back to their more exclusive circles.

CHAPTER VII

1851–1857

THE year 1851, as has appeared in Chapter V., found Eliza Lynn severing her connection with the *Morning Chronicle*. What was the actual beginning of the breach between her and the editor is not altogether clear. It is enough to say that she suddenly failed to please. She "who up to this time had been a kind of cherished seedling, who might some day develop into the very roof-tree of the office, now could do nothing that was right." Day by day her independent articles were rejected and her routine work found fault with. Then came the final scene, and she was once again "adrift on the great sea of life, with a dragging anchor and no harbour in sight."

But her anchor did not drag long. "I was," she writes, "too energetic to be demoralised by my first failure; and my fall in nowise maimed the hope and resolve which are the best pioneers of certainty. Casting about for a continuance of press-work, which was the substance, while my independent writings were the decorations of my income, I happened on a Parisian correspondentship just then vacant, and went over to the Brain of the World as one of 'Our Own.'

"Here I entered on a new set of experiences, and broke fresh ground everywhere. I had several introductions, both private and official; and some to the confraternity. But I did not find these last very useful. I do not know how these things are managed now, when telegraphy has equalised endeavour; but then the whole system was one of rivalry. In the interests of his paper, each man wished to be first in

the field and to have the practical monopoly of private information. Hence, brotherly kindness, and doing to others as you would be done by, did not obtain among men whose professional loyalty lay in misleading, tripping up the heels of, and outstripping their competitors."

What the paper was for which she corresponded I have been unable to discover, but it could hardly have been a very lucrative appointment, for, as we shall see, she was now about to feel the pinch of very narrow means.

Arrived in Paris, she soon made acquaintances and friends. Amongst the latter she was fortunate enough to number Madame von Mohl, wife of the distinguished Orientalist, Julius von Mohl, who at that time held the Chair of Persian at the Collège de France.

She says of him, "He was a very dungeon of learning—I use the word intentionally—for, like a dungeon, for the most part he kept his treasures under lock and key, away from the daily light, and only at stated times made a grand gaol-delivery in his books. Still, he was gentle and human, and knew when to unbend; and though he did not take the initiative, he gave me valuable advice when I asked for it, and such information as I wanted, and in all things treated me like a rational being—though I must have been to him terribly embryonic and inchoate."

At their house, Eliza Lynn, "then one of the vanguard of the advanced women," but afterwards, as is well known, left far behind in the rush of the movement, met many notable people, and made some good friendships.

One of these, William Rathbone Greg, had already, before they met, greatly fascinated her with his *Creed of Christendom*, and now his sparkling talk and pleasant personality completed the charm already begun. Twenty years younger than he was, she forgave "his tremendous assumption of superiority," and thus at once gained "his goodwill, and, as time went on, a more valuable measure of friendship." Not that she gave in her adherence to what he considered his satisfactory solution of the Enigmas of Life. Indeed, to the last he counted it for blame to her that he could not

influence her more than he did. But he recognised that she was true as steel to him and all other friends, and that her heart was sound if her head was not.

Of that great actress Fanny Kemble, whom she also met in Paris at this time, she writes—

"The deep voice and stage-stateliness of manner, the assumption of supremacy and really cruel strength of this lady, crushed me flat. The way in which she levelled her big black eyes at me, and calmly put her foot on me, was an experience never to be forgotten. The pitiless brutality of her contradictions, her scathing sarcasm, her contemptuous taunts, knowing that I was unable to answer her, the way in which she used her matured powers to wound and hurt my even then immature nature, gave me a certain shuddering horror for her, such as I fancy a man would feel for one who had flayed him in the market-place. I am thankful to Fate which never threw us together again.

"Years after, I knew her yet more gifted sister (Adelaide Sartoris) in Rome. She was a very different person—as womanly as this other was virile; as sweet and generous and sympathetic as this other was arbitrary, insolent, and inhuman. A characteristic little trait of the former was told me, instancing, to my way of thinking, the stony and unyielding quality of her mind. She was used to number all her dresses and hang them up in rows. If it came to the turn of her gold tissue to be worn, she would wear it, though she might be going to a simple family dinner; if it were the turn for a morning silk, she would wear that, though she had to appear at a stately ball. This was her method of expressing order; and in this apparently insignificant little habit may be seen the germ of all she was and did, and the cause of all she suffered and made others suffer."

In Paris, too, she first met the Brownings, of whom the wife was in those days the more popular and famous. Her senior by a dozen years, Mrs. Browning took up a critical attitude towards her younger sister in letters.

"When she talked to me," writes the latter, "she used to look at me through the dropping curtains of her long

ringlets as if she would have read my secret soul. I used to feel as if I were on a moral dissecting-table, while she probed my thoughts and touched speculative tracts which probably seemed to her hopelessly wrong and corrupt. She did not show that she disliked nor distrusted me, but something about me must have jarred her highly strung, sensitive nature."

Other notabilities with whom she came in contact were Ary Scheffer, politician, soldier, and artist; Jean Pierre Béranger; and Daniele Manin, the Italian politician and revolutionary leader, who, after he had proclaimed the Republic of Venice and driven out the Austrians in 1848, had, on the termination of that memorable siege, withdrawn to Paris. Here he was gaining a living by teaching Italian.

"With him," she writes, "my relations were friendly almost to intimacy, and I used often to go and see him at his meagre rooms in the unfashionable quarter where he lived. He was always wrapped in cloaks and blankets, and complained much of the cold; but he was ever dignified and noble. His daughter was then in bad health. It was the sad beginning of the sadder end; for when she died all that was essentially Manin died too, and the broken heart of the father put the finishing touch to the ruined career of the patriot."

"At this time," she continues, "I was poor, rather than well off, and I had to live modestly if I would live honourably. Hence I had my eyrie on the fourth floor, where I shared the apartment of a fellow-countrywoman a few years older than myself. Her French mother and Irish father were dead—the latter quite lately—and her sole inheritance was the lease of this apartment for the five years it had to run. We lived a rough kind of life; but at our age roughnesses did not count. An old woman used to come in the morning to *faire le ménage* for the day; after which we were left to ourselves. We had to take our meals out of doors, save for the *premier déjeûner* of bread and coffee; and we had only two rooms—one each. But our friends used to toil up . . .

to visit us. Men of note, women of condition, . . . they all came to make merry or to talk seriously, as the humour took them. Among the rest I remember Mr. Thackeray coming here to see me; and the good-humoured way in which he sat on the flat-topped black box, not to disturb the mass of papers heaped on my second chair, was especially delightful. Mr. Greg also used to come, but he generally fell foul of my hundred and ninety steps; and it was here that I first saw Henry Wills, who, with his wife, afterwards became one of my dearest friends."

That she rather understated than exaggerated her hand-to-mouth existence at this time, is evident from the following letters. Mr. W. H. Wills was assistant-editor of *Household Words*, for which periodical Eliza Lynn was now a fairly constant writer. In making out a list of his contributors later on, Charles Dickens wrote against her name, "Good for anything, and thoroughly reliable."

E. L. to Mr. W. H. Wills.

98 Rue de la Pepinière, Paris,
16th June 1853.

"My dear Sir,—Thank you very much for your extreme kindness and thoughtfulness in sending me £5. You do not know how grateful I am to you! I will do my best, now that it is a point of honour, to write you one of the prettiest things I can drag out of my brains. I will try so hard to send you something *really* nice! I am very quiet in Paris, and writing a new book, but I am intensely happy in all the flowers I have in my room (such an artiste's room and life altogether!); in my sweet, gentle, dear little hostess; in the gaiety of the streets and the novelty of the whole life; and I would rather stay here on £100 a year than live in London on five. I have a canary that I hang amongst my flowers, roses and mignonette, and carnations and 'laurier rose' (I don't remember the English name), which, for want of a flower-stand, I place on one of my boxes. My room is tiled, beautifully clean, and slippery as glass. My curtains are ragged and patched crimson cotton; my bed is a small sofa

covered with canvas; I have a glass about three inches square, which gives me a wen on one side of my face; and I am up *au quatrième*. We are both very poor, my pretty hostess and myself, and we make 'treats' of a few radishes or a dish of peas or asparagus. We live very plainly, and study economy in everything—but I am so happy, so happy! It is a life I love. I always hated the stiff, heavy, expensive English mode, when all one's money went in board and lodging. I want my books and a few old favourite ornaments I have got in London—a 'Sabrina' and a gold basket and a case of birds—and I want an easy-chair, for I have not got one—and a new bonnet!—and I should be perfectly satisfied. But I am ten years younger than I was last winter, and have almost forgotten how to shed tears—which has generally been rather a favourite occupation of mine. All, all that I want now is just enough to go on with. I had only 'provision' for two weeks more, when now your £5 have made me, oh, happier than our poor little queen is!

"God bless you for your kindness, and believe me always, your obliged and grateful E. LYNN."

E. L. TO MR. W. H. WILLS.

98 RUE DE LA PEPINIÈRE, PARIS,
June 1853.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have received your £5 note to-day, for which I beg to return you my best thanks. You are becoming quite my monetary Providence, for I assure you on my word of honour I had only one franc in my purse when your letter came. I have had five francs for ten days, but they have dwindled into one. Now don't you feel how grateful I must be to you, or Mr. Dickens, or *Household Words*—or to some one, I don't know who, in Wellington Street North, who gets me out of my embarrassments so pleasantly?

"I will send you two sketches soon, one the 'Garden of the Tuileries' and the other 'A French Ménage'—but I hope that you will find yourselves very, very deeply in *my* debt, for my Marie has a long fever, and you will find her powers of elongation tremendous.

"I hoped to have finished the 'Gardens' to-day, but I am

disgracefully idle. I cannot write. I mess about my flowers and read snatches of French, and then become resolute and brave and sit down to write—but I do nothing! I have taken a fitful passion for embroidery, and here do I, a veritable *bas bleu*, sit for hours stitching at collars that are not half so well done as what I might buy, and which cost me days and days in the spoiling. But I have the embroidery fever on me, and I suppose it must run its course like other fevers. The weather has been fearfully hot, but to-day we have had a miniature deluge and a thunderstorm, and there is more chance of surviving to the end of the summer.

"With renewed thanks—for indeed I feel, perhaps falsely, a certain *personal* kindness in my intercourse with you—believe me, dear sir, most sincerely yours,

"E. LYNN."

It must not be supposed that Eliza Lynn's life in Paris was spent exclusively or even mainly in the society of celebrities. Indeed, the slenderness of her purse and her own inclination put anything of the sort out of the question.

There were other things which she could do and rejoiced in doing. There were the thousand and one delights and amusements of the fascinating city to be investigated at the slightest possible outlay, and numberless pleasure-loving fellow-creatures to be watched, labelled, and put by for use. Not that her greatest pleasure was to be found in such surroundings, stimulating and interesting though they were. Long walks and excursions to Vincennes, Versailles, St. Germain, Fontainebleau, Asnières, Ville d'Avray, and the like, were fullest of delight. For, as she has often pointed out, it was among the contradictions of which her character was full, that she combined the most passionate love for nature and all its manifestations with a voluntary residence in towns.

After a few years of this strange life, she returned to England. Her Parisian experiences had changed her point of view on more matters than one, and in nothing more than

on the marriage question. More than ever she had now become convinced that "society is built up by experiments, and that the final word has not been said on anything." She came to the conclusion that "in Roman Catholic countries the sublime theory of the sacramental quality of marriage is wholly inoperative in practice, and that this is none the more sacred because it is indissoluble. On the contrary, the unyielding nature of the tie forces consideration for human weakness; and adultery is condoned because divorce is impossible."

As a result, though she never went so far as those who would have no bond outside inclination, she did go so far as to commend those countries which allow of divorce by mutual consent, and without the necessity of committing a moral offence to obtain relief.

She held that "the worst possible legislation is that which multiplies unnecessary restrictions and thus creates artificial offences. The best, that which leaves the individual unchecked liberty up to the point which harms no one" but himself.

These ideas were not, of course, peculiar to her then, and they have become more than common since; but they demand passing mention, for they were destined to colour more than one important act of her life.

In 1855 the Rev. James Lynn died, and the old homes of Crosthwaite and Caldbeck passed into the hands of strangers. In the following year, Gadshill, which he had left to his daughters, was sold to Charles Dickens.

Eliza alone of all the sisters was now unmarried. So it was that she became at this time more isolated even than she had been before. With the breaking up of the old home, and the forming of new relationships by those to whom it had hitherto been the centre of family life, there was naturally a loosening of the common tie.

By this time she had undoubtedly much moderated her early views of men and things.

In her youth "revolt was in the air, and public events had added fuel to the original fire" of her temperament. She had

seen righteousness in the Rebecca Riots; she had firmly believed "that Sir James Graham, when he opened Mazzini's letters, was the paid and authorised spy of the house of Hapsburg"; "King Dan" had been her idol; she had been an enthusiastic supporter of the Corn Law League and the Reform Bill; she had seen the French Republic proclaimed, and "had believed in the formula, Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité, as a new gospel against which the gates of hell itself would not prevail," and she had seen "the murdered corpse of this fair hope lying beneath the heel of Louis Napoleon, and the empire established on the basis of perjury and murder." And she had seen Orsini standing in the dock, and had regarded him as the victim.

But now, political events were quieting down; and partly as a consequence of this, partly by reason of her own mental development, her ideas were becoming modified and more practical.

The condition of the poor; the relations between capital and labour; the need of "levelling up" the masses by improved education and by increased political responsibilities, were the subjects which now sat nearest to her heart.

The "Death to the Tyrants!" phase was now giving place to the calmer and wiser conviction "that reforms to be lasting must be legal, and that true liberty comes by the slower process of growth and gradual fitness, rather than by the sudden leap into supreme power of men unused to responsibilities and incapable of self-government."

From the point of view of the thoroughgoing Radical, she was, no doubt, in Mr. G. J. Holyoake's words, "suffering from the fatty degeneration of the understanding that comes to the well-fed Liberal." She was learning that violence, "the ugly side of reaction against wrong," had done as much to retard as to advance the birth hour of true liberty. She was grasping the fact, which all must grasp whose mental development keeps pace with the bodily, that the salvation of society comes not by cataclysms and *coups d'état*, but by the gradual education of public opinion; and, as a corollary, that personal

rancour is as powerless as the steady and sustained pressure of argument is almighty.

Fortunately for her, there was, notwithstanding her ebulliently enthusiastic temperament, just that "twopennyworth of common sense in the midst of the intolerable quantity of impulse with which she was handicapped," as she herself has put it, which kept her out of any actual participation in the insurgencies of the time.

The following account of the manner in which she received the news of the death, in 1855, of the Czar Nicholas—the strong man who was animated throughout his career by a desire to crush out every spark of freedom from his country, and to establish a rigid absolutism—is very characteristic.

"I remember," she writes, "the evening when news of the Czar's death flashed into London. To me it was the forerunner of peace and the redemption of thousands of lives through the loss of one. Therefore it was a thing rightfully welcome to England. Yet Nicholas was a man of whom his worst enemies must speak with respect for his person, how much soever they may hate the system of which he was the crowning symbol. I was in a state of boiling excitement and could not remain at home, but dashed out in a hansom, I did not care where. I remember driving round Regent's Park in the aimless way of simple emotion trying to work itself off; and then I went to the house of some pleasant friends, with whom I was accustomed to spend many of my evenings. I thought they would sympathise with my exultation, and share in my rejoicing over the probable speedy settlement of the war; and I bounded up the stairs, bursting into the room like a whirlwind raised by laughter.

"I found the wife pale and in tears; the young people sitting about in mute, desponding, half-terrified distress; the husband pacing the room in the violent agonies of despair. What did it all mean? I was aghast, and not the less so when the sweet wife sobbed out—

"'We are ruined! My dear, we are absolutely and eternally ruined!'

"Mr. —— was on the Stock Exchange. He had specu-

lated for a fall; and the sudden death of the Czar had sent all investments up like so many balloons, and swept away his last penny.

"This was the first time I had come face to face with the sorrow of private loss through public gain, and it made an indelible impression on me. Natural as was the despair of the ruined individual, in face of the general and national good it seemed to me so strangely unpatriotic, so fatally egotistic!"

Here we recognise the early manifestation of that thoroughgoing altruism by which those who knew her in later days found her animated. Even those who did not sympathise could not but render their tribute of admiration to the magnanimity which saw nothing in the martyrdom of the individual where the welfare of the race demanded it—and this though she herself might be the victim, with no hope of paradise to compensate for the suffering.

I shall conclude this chapter with an encounter which she had with George Cruikshank about this time. He had now entered upon the campaign against drink to which he was destined to give up the last twenty-five years of his life.

"One evening," she says, "we had been to Westland Marston's, and we walked home together. On the way we passed a group of rowdy, drunken men and women. Suddenly George stopped, and, taking hold of my arm, said solemnly—

"'*You* are responsible for those poor wretches.'

"I answered that I did not exactly see this, and disclaimed any share in their degradation. But he insisted on it, and hung those ruined souls like infernal bells about my neck, tinkling out my own damnation, because at supper I had drunk a glass of champagne from which he had vainly tried to dissuade me!"

CHAPTER VIII

MARRIAGE—1858

IN 1858, Eliza Lynn married, as his second wife, William James Linton, the eminent wood-engraver.

Before dealing with what was to prove a far from satisfactory union, it will be well to say a few words concerning this remarkable man.[1]

Born in London in 1812, he had by his sixteenth year given such artistic promise that he was apprenticed to the wood-engraver, G. W. Bonner. Specimens of his earliest work are to be found in Martin and Westall's *Pictorial Illustrations of the Bible* (1833). From henceforth his talent received ample recognition, and he soon took a foremost place among the wood-engravers of the period.

In 1842 he went into partnership with John Orrin Smith. The *Illustrated London News* was just then being projected, and the proprietors at once secured the services of the newly constituted firm. The following year Orrin Smith died, and Linton, who was by this time married, found himself in sole charge of a business upon which two families were dependent. In 1852 he took up his residence at Brantwood on Coniston Water, the house which was later the home of John Ruskin.

All these years he had been hard at work with his graver, not only on the *London News* but on books innumerable.

His artistic work alone, however, was not sufficient outlet for his energies. When quite a young man he had imbibed a taste for politics, and before long became a zealous Chartist.

[1] For further details I would refer the reader to an article by Mr. F. G. Kitton on "William James Linton, Engraver, Poet, and Political Writer," which appeared in the *English Illustrated Magazine* for April 1891.

Later, by his marriage with the sister of Thomas Wade, editor of *Bell's New Weekly Messenger*, a semi-radical London paper, he had been brought into close contact with the practical, social, and political problems of the time. In 1838 he projected, and lost his money over, a sort of cheap library for the people, called *The National;* and in 1840 he wrote the *Life of Thomas Paine.* "Four years later," says Mr. Kitton, "he was concerned with Mazzini in calling the attention of Parliament to the fact that the exile's letters had been opened in the English Post Office. This led to a personal friendship with the great Italian, and involved Linton in European politics which made a large demand upon his time.

"In 1848 he was deputed to carry to the French Provisional Government the first congratulatory address of English workmen, and in the following year . . . removed to the North, though still engaged in engrossing political work. At this time he edited a twopenny weekly paper, *The Cause of the People,* published in the Isle of Man; but a more important venture was the founding of a London weekly newspaper called the *Leader*, advocating Republican principles. Among those associated with him in the enterprise were George Henry Lewes and Thornton Hunt, who, however, disappointed him, and he withdrew from the speculation.

"In 1850 he was engaged in writing a series of articles on Republican principles, being an exposition of the views and doctrines of his friend Joseph Mazzini, in a weekly publication called the *Red Republican*, edited by another old friend, Mr. George Julian Harney. Not more than twelve months after this he commenced at Brantwood a publication of his own, first in the form of weekly tracts and then as a monthly magazine. This was the *English Republic* (which was carried on for four years, and in which everything not expressly assigned to *real* names is Mr. Linton's), a work intended as a "useful exponent of Republican principles; a faithful record of Republican progress throughout the world; an organ of propagandism and a medium of communication for the active Republicans in England." To this Mazzini and Herzen the Russian patriot contributed some papers.

"Mr. Linton's friend of long standing, Mr. W. E. Adams (present editor of the *Newcastle Chronicle*), has favoured me with some interesting notes of other publications with which Mr. Linton was connected. Mr. Linton appended a note to the last of the *Red Republican* articles, requesting all who sympathised with the ideas expressed in them to communicate with him at Ravenglass, Cumberland, where he then resided. Mr. Adams writes—

"'I was one of the young men of the time who answered his appeal. The result of Mr. Linton's article and action was that "Republican Associations for the teaching of Republican principles" were established in various parts of the country—among other places at my native town, Cheltenham. I was also one of the three young men who went to Brantwood in the spring of 1854, to help in the mechanical portion of the publication of the *English Republic*. Here we printed not only that work, but also a Tyneside magazine called the *Northern Tribune;* but the scheme in which we were engaged was not financially successful, hence the *English Republic* ceased, the establishment was broken up, and the little community we had constituted had dispersed. Just previous to the Brantwood experiment, Mr. Linton had printed for private circulation a volume of poems entitled *The Plaint of Freedom*. It bears the date 1852. No name was attached to the book, nor was it known, I think, till long afterwards that he was the author. A copy of the work was sent to Walter Savage Landor, who highly eulogised the verses in a sonnet addressed "To the Author of *The Plaint of Freedom*," beginning with the lines—

> Lauder of Milton! worthy of his laud!
> How shall I name thee? Art thou yet unnamed?'"

To these particulars furnished to Mr. Kitton, Mr. Adams has, for the purposes of this book, been good enough to add the following account of the family in the days preceding Eliza Lynn's acquaintance with the Lintons.

"The family at Brantwood in 1854 consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Linton and their six children—three boys and three

WILLIAM JAMES LINTON

CIRCA 1858

girls—the youngest mere babies. The cleverest and most promising of the boys—the second son, Lancelot—died early. All the children were charming romps, who made things lively for everybody about the place. Mrs. Linton was an amiable lady—quiet, cheerful, and contented—devoted to her children. The life at Brantwood was very secluded. Mr. Linton, busy with his engraving, his writing, and his correspondence, made few friends in the neighbourhood. I can recall only one—Dr. Bywell, then in practice there—though once Harriet Martineau came over from Ambleside. Indeed, Mr. Linton, as I know from my intercourse with the villagers in Coniston, was regarded as a considerable mystery, while the sort of work we were doing in the printing office caused us all to be viewed with suspicion. Mr. Linton had, however, a friend in Keswick, Dr. Lietch, who had told him about a young lady there, a writer of novels and an ardent Radical, whose acquaintance he thought he ought to make. This, of course, was Mi · Lynn. Well, Miss Lynn was invited to Brantwood. She came for the first time while I was there. I remember her as a tall, stately, handsome young woman. We were all captivated by her appearance and manners. It was soon after this that Miss Lynn wrote for the *Republic* an article on Mary Wollstonecraft; also, I think, a notable poem in the same number signed 'Agathon.'"

It is not surprising to learn from the above that the establishment was looked on with suspicion by the villagers, more especially when it is remembered that the first thing Mr. Linton did on constructing an outbuilding to the Brantwood property was to adorn it on the outside with "God and the People," and suchlike legends, which had at that time been adopted as revolutionary mottoes.

Besides being suspicious of the work that was being done at Brantwood, and probably resenting the seclusion which Mr. Linton deemed it proper to maintain, the villagers apparently had their doubts as to the financial stability of the concern. As Mr. Adams writes to me—

"Only an enthusiast would have thought of setting up a printing office in a remote quarter of the Lake District, miles

away from the nearest railway station. Paper and other materials had all to be carted over the Fells from Windermere to Brantwood, and the printed magazines had all to be carted over the Fells from Brantwood to Windermere back again. Nor did the circulation of the *English Republic* warrant this inevitable addition to the cost of production. As a matter of fact, it never did pay at all. Mr. Linton had therefore to finance the establishment out of his own earnings as an engraver. When he had any money he shared it with his comrades and assistants in the printing office. When he had none, they had to do without. So it came to pass that I, who was the first to leave the company, having only five or six shillings in hand, had to tramp all the way home from Coniston to Cheltenham — a necessity I never afterwards regretted, however, since I thus learnt from personal experience the extraordinary kindness and sympathy which tramps and thieves often show to one another. But the good folks of Coniston, even before our impecunious days commenced, were disinclined to serve us. If we wanted to be clothed or shod, the tailor or the cordwainer, prior to taking our measure for suit or shoes, pointedly demanded, 'When are ye gawin' to paay?' This want of faith in our honesty, as much as the suspicion of our proceedings, prevented any close communion between the natives and ourselves."

The *English Republic*, which was issued from here, was written mainly by Linton, but he had some financial assistance from the then equally advanced Republican, Mr. Joseph Cowen.

Linton was an enthusiast, exceedingly unpractical—perhaps it should be said unworldly. That he should have reached such eminence in his art as he undoubtedly did, when he was for ever starting papers, delivering addresses, and writing verse—verse, we must remember, hailed as poetry by Landor—is nothing less than extraordinary.

This, then, was the remarkable man who was destined to play so important a part in Eliza Lynn's life.

Of their first meeting, Mrs. Mather, a daughter of Mr. Linton's, furnishes me with the following note:—

"The correspondence (brought about by Dr. Lietch) led to her coming on a visit to our home 'Brantwood' on Coniston Water (between 1854–56). There she and our real mother became warm and attached friends, and it was our mother, an invalid for years, who first asked Miss Lynn to care for the seven children she was leaving, the eldest only fourteen years of age at the time. After the loss of our mother, in 1857 I believe, Miss Lynn took my two youngest sisters—the baby named Eliza, after her—to Hastings for the benefit of the sea air. I and our eldest sister joined them towards winter, and in December, the baby whom she had grown to love as her very own, and whom she had taught to call her 'Mammy Lizzie,' died."

Mrs. Mather's account given above tallies with that which Mrs. Linton herself gave to Mrs. Bridell-Fox. It was, she said, a promise made to the first Mrs. Linton, whom she nursed most devotedly during a long and most painful illness, to care for her children, that chiefly influenced her. How in later days she preached early and late against such quixotism as a motive for marriage, all her friends and readers of her novels well know.

It is a fact perhaps worth mentioning, that before going to stay with the Lintons for the first time, she told her people that she greatly dreaded the visit, as she felt certain that something would happen to change her whole life.

Personally I do not believe that this was in any way a premonition of her marriage. It is, I think, far more probable that she felt that intimacy with Mr. Linton might result in her being drawn actively into the service of the Republican propaganda—a course which she had determinedly avoided in her own most effervescent days, and which she dreaded more than ever now that her enthusiasms were taking on a certain modification.

We will now supplement the above somewhat fragmentary account of events preceding the marriage from the pages of *Christopher Kirkland*, winnowing the *Dichtung* from the *Wahrheit* with the help of such extraneous evidence as is

available. Concerning her first visit to Brantwood she writes—

"I felt as if I had got into a new world—one with which my experiences on this old earth of ours had no point in common, and were of no use as guide or glossary. Playing in the neglected, untrimmed garden, where never tree nor bush was lopped nor pruned, and where the long grass of the lawn was starred with dandelions and daisies as better flowers than those which man could cultivate, was a troop of little children, none of whom was more beautiful than another. They were all dressed exactly alike—in long blouses of that coarse blue flannel with which housemaids scrub the floors; and all had precisely the same kind of hats—the girls distinguished from the boys only by a somewhat broader band of faded ribbon. Nazarenes, even to the eldest boy of fourteen, they wore their hair as nature ordained, in long loose locks to their shoulders. It was difficult to distinguish the sex in this queer epicene costume, which left it doubtful whether they were girls bloomerised or boys in feminine tunics; for the only differences were—cloth trousers for the boys, cotton for the girls, and the respective width of the hat-ribbon aforesaid. But they were lovely as angels, and picturesque as so many Italian studies; so that amazement lost itself in admiration, and one forgave the unfitness of things for the sake of their beauty."

From other sources I learn that the little Lintons used to suffer much from the ridicule of the children of the neighbourhood, who used to hoot after them and ask whether they were boys or girls.

"The house itself was found and furnished on the same lines. There were no carpets, but there were rare pictures and first proofs unframed; casts of noble cinque-cento work, darkened with dust; superb shells; and all the precious lumber of an artist's home, crowded on shelves of rough-hewn, unvarnished deal set against the unpapered whitewashed wall. There were not enough chairs for the family, and empty packing-cases eked out the deficiency. For their food, meat was a luxury, wine as rare as Olympian nectar, and

sweetmeats were forbidden as the analogues of vicious luxury. Milk, bread, vegetables, and oatmeal, with treacle as the universal sweetener, were the food-stuffs by which the Lintons believed they should rear a family consecrated to the regeneration of society. The boys were to be great artists or divine poets. The girls were to be preachers or prophetesses. One or two might be told off as mothers to keep up the supply of the Chosen. But, for the most part, their sphere of activity would be the world, not the home—their care humanity, not the family."

Of Linton himself, she said—

"No one who knew him in these early days could fail to love and reverence him. No matter how little you sympathised with his methods, you could not do other than respect and admire his personality." She told a common friend of hers and mine that when first she knew him his face was the face of a Christ. His political creed was his religion. He believed that a social revolution was at hand, when abstract right would take the place of godless expediency, when wars would cease, when the reign of peace and truth, of justice without flaw, and perfect purity of life alike for men and women, would begin.

"His theological creed was a large loose jumble of Christianity and Pantheism, the chief working tenets of which were: belief in the direct personal superintendence of God over the affairs of men; faith in the power of truth and the invincibility of the right, with the correlative belief that falsehood would not prevail nor wrong ultimately conquer because of this personal rule of God and the 'stream of tendency' in humanity."

In the third year of Eliza Lynn's intimacy in this curious household, Mrs. Linton was struck down by a terrible illness. For months before her death she was unable to do anything for herself, and would have no one near her but her newly found friend.

Miss Lynn gave up everything and devoted herself to her service. To the last year of her life she could not speak of that terrible time without horror and dismay.

Nor was the poor victim alone dependent upon her. She became for the time being not only the guardian of the whole family, but to a great extent provided the means for carrying on the establishment. Such money as she had put by and was earning she placed freely at their disposal, constituting herself in all respects their good providence.

Not that she ever suggested that her behaviour was purely magnanimous. The Lintons had deeply interested her. They had fascinated her by their very strangeness, linked as it was to much goodness and much beauty. And what was more, she found in their affection some sort of compensation for the loss of him from whom she had been so lately separated by difference of creed.

The unquestioning simplicity with which they accepted all she did for them fitted in with her humour. They evinced no fulsome gratitude, but took it all as a matter of course. It was all part and parcel of the social millennium that was beginning. She was doing the right thing in bearing their burdens, and being a true woman she could do nothing less.

So it happened as she wrote, that "this kind of communism brought about a closer intimacy and on my side a still deeper affection—the helper always loving the dependent."

At last the end came. The poor sufferer died without regret—full of faith that her dear ones would be cared for by her Father in heaven—working principally through her friend to whom she bequeathed them.

It is not necessary to dwell at any length upon what followed. It is enough to say that Eliza was in that frame of mind which made benevolence her greatest solace, her only happiness. As she has written—

"Full of desire to serve one whom I loved and respected —eager to make loyal response to the poor dead friend who had trusted me—seeing only all that was beautiful in Mr. Linton's nature and pitiful in his condition — loving the children like my own, and earnest to see them better cared for, better taught, more wisely guided, than they were—my common sense, overweighted by religious zeal and altruistic

pity, by affection, by principle, and by hope—I took the irretrievable step; and in less than two years from Mrs. Linton's death I married Mr. Linton, and took his family for my own."

Of course it is easy enough to prophesy after the event. Certainly it seems to us who knew Mrs. Lynn Linton in later life that the experiment was foredoomed to failure.

In the first place there was the fatal fact that personally Mr. Linton failed to satisfy her fastidious taste. He was ungraceful—careless in the matter of dress and generally unkempt—with unstarched collars and long hair. He was unthrifty, unmethodical, and of the two preferred disorder to regularity. His "love of free nature which left the dandelions on the lawn and forebore to lop the low-growing branches of the trees, manifested itself in the house by a liberal dislocation of hours and the want of circumscription—of apportionment —all through."

But she was "blinded by the splendour of the Divine handwriting on the wall which she thought bade her do this thing; and by her somewhat arrogant belief that she was strong enough to remould and save."

She has often told me that she had largely returned at this time to a belief in Providence and a personal leading by the Divine hand. No action of her life, she both wrote and said, was ever based on a more entire sense of duty than was this. In none did she ever wish to do so well for others, with so little regard for her own condition. Not that she felt at the moment any personal repugnance, but she did marry with more sense of duty than of attraction, and she knew full well that she was making a sacrifice.

Of course it will be said that as she had made her bed so she should have been content to lie on it. But it is cheap enough for those who are pliable by nature and whose couches are of down, with here and there a crumpled rose-leaf, to counsel perfection. That she did loyally do her best to perform her side of the bargain, but that the task proved too difficult, we shall see in due course.

One sacrifice on Mr. Linton's part she insisted upon at

the outset. The house which he and the mother of his children had found sufficient for their happiness would, she said, prove the grave of hers, and she could no more live in the neglect, disorder, unthrift, and squalor which had been the normal condition of things, than she could live in a wigwam with a Cherokee Indian. Hence she stipulated for a house in London and the orderliness of a civilised domesticity.

She also urged Mr. Linton to give her a list of his debts, but this she could never get from him. Not because he was ashamed, nor because he wished to conceal them, but simply because he "could not understand the value of financial order, and had always that trust in ravens and things coming right of themselves which despises effort."

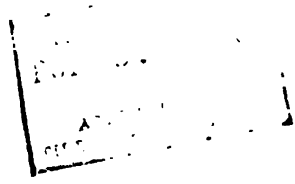
"I could not," she wrote, "convince him of the need of method, regularity, foresight, or any other economic virtue. He was sweet in word and acquiescent in manner; smiled, promised compliance—and indeed did much that I wished because I wished it. But I never touched the core."

The marriage took place in London on 24th March 1858.

Before she had been a wife three months she was asking herself the questions: "How long will this last? Will temperament and long usage prove too strong for the new practice? and will the bent bow spring back and the strained cord break?"

There had been no doubt a sort of intellectual fascination about Mr. Linton which had blinded her eyes to his material shortcomings. And the intimacy of marriage was just the one condition which must render the ignoring of such qualities a matter of sheer impossibility.

There were plenty of other men who had shown a desire to marry Eliza Lynn, but she had, as she said afterwards, "gone through the wood and picked up the crooked stick."



MRS. LYNN LINTON

ABOUT THE TIME OF HER MARRIAGE (1858)

CHAPTER IX

MARRIAGE—1858–1867 (CONTINUED)

IN accordance with the stipulation mentioned above, a house was taken in London—27 Leinster Square, Bayswater—and was furnished by Mrs. Linton with such sufficiency as her means would allow.

Mr. Linton doubtless "thought it a pity—and more—to spend on material the time and money which should be given to humanity," and "could not be made to approve of that which he regarded as the mal-administration of a trust." But as it was her own money that she was spending, he let it pass without active opposition.

"Also he allowed me," she wrote, "to change the ordering of things for the children. Their epicene costume was put off for the ordinary jackets and frocks of ordinary English children; the boys were sent to school, and a governess taught the girls at home. He used to laugh at their studies, but quite good-naturedly, without malice or bitterness—only with a little gentle ridicule; the ridicule of superior insight and higher aims—finding art and literature mere waste of precious time, and woman's work, such as sewing and the like, degrading to the finer functions. Still he left the governess very much to herself, and did not interfere in her curriculum. He was, indeed, very sweet and complaisant in those early days; and of two threads the white is as true as the black.

"All things in the house, and the house itself, being new and fresh, the radical defects of my husband's character as a master were not at first visible. Though I objected to the children amusing themselves by carving fancy arabesques on

the sideboard, playing at ball in the drawing-room, slitting up the oilcloth, and the like, things went on with peaceful serenity, and for the first two months we 'stood on velvet.' Also, the sense of security from poverty, of rest from strain, of a stable background and a strong arm on which to lean, won Mr. Linton to a certain amount of domesticity, and made many things in his new life comforting and joyful. Then he liked me in a way that had the charm of novelty. He looked up to me as more practical than himself, and as having a surer judgment in worldly matters; and for the time he laid aside his own and accepted my responsibility, which was like taking a breath on an uphill climb."

I here insert a note kindly furnished by Mr. Harvey Orrinsmith[1] (the son of Mr. Linton's old partner), who was intimate with the Lintons during their married life. He writes—

"I made the acquaintance of the late Mrs. Lynn Linton when, as Miss Lynn, she used to come to see us in Hatton Garden. She drove up in a hansom cab, a proceeding that was regarded at that period as somewhat fast. She always wore spectacles, was nearly handsome, and had a dashing way with her that was distinctly attractive. Linton, a thorough Bohemian, was quite fascinated by her fine-ladyism.

"I remember her saying that she would gladly renounce any intellectual gifts to which she might lay claim, for the compelling power of great physical beauty. Later in life she once said to me, 'Oh, Harvey! how sad a thing it is when, by the process of time, a woman feels that she is losing her personal charm.'

"Linton and his new wife (Mrs. Lynn Linton) were very fond; she called him 'Manny,' and all went well for some while. She had money, but Linton's income was precarious, although he often made large sums by his engraving.

"They started their married life at too high a pitch: a house was taken in Leinster Square; Mrs. Linton was very fond of society, and hoped to make a 'salon.' Large receptions

[1] After the death of his father Mr. Orrinsmith united the names.

were given, great expenses incurred, and soon the *res angusta domi* set in with severity."

If in the first place the Leinster Square house was intended to be a well-ordered home, in the second and not less important place it was intended to be a sort of plate-glass advertisement of both Linton and herself, and of the wares which they had for sale to the public. And it cannot be doubted that, if the former had been content to devote himself to his profession as wood-engraver and artist, their combined incomes would well have justified the experiment.

As it was, however, Mr. Linton's head was full of dreams of an immediate social millennium, and as time went on he more and more gave up to mankind the energies which his wife considered should be devoted to the more prosaic object of providing for the family.

The open house which was kept became the resort of two strangely opposite sets. The one which circled round Mr. Linton was composed of social reformers, "poor patriots and penniless propagandists." The other, of which Mrs. Linton was the centre, was regarded by her husband as "worldly, fashionable, frivolous, and ungodly." And what is more, he did not hesitate to make it clear to her friends what his opinion of them was. The result may be imagined. Their self-respect forbade them to return, and Mrs. Linton found herself excommunicate.

This was bad enough, but there were other matters which, to one of Mrs. Linton's mental and practical orderliness, were even more intolerable.

In her own words, Mr. Linton soon "began absolutely to disregard the times and rules without which no home-life can go on with comfort or decency. For an eight o'clock breakfast he would come down at ten; for a six o'clock dinner he would appear at eight; and he took it as unloving —not disrespectful, but unkind—if we sat down without him. This was disastrous for us all. For my own work it was ruinous; for the children destructive both to their health and education. But remonstrance made matters worse, and the only way in which I could touch my husband was by a tender

kind of coaxing flattery—beseeching him to do of his own free, grand, loving heart, that which was the absolute obligation of his plain duty. And I ask, how is married life possible under such conditions?

"Again, I had occasion to be disturbed on account of the expense at which we lived. And yet we did not seem to live extravagantly. The lines on which our home was based were modest and well within our income; but I had to draw largely from such savings as the furnishing of the house had left, and my hope of making provision for the future was merged in the fear that our earnings would not cover our expenditure. Money ran away like water in sand."

In all this Mrs. Linton did not fail to blame herself for having undertaken a task which she only recognised as impossible when it was too late. The temperamental weaknesses of Mr. Linton's character were so evident, that she was ever afterwards astonished that she had allowed her judgment to be blinded by the glamour of what she took to be her mission.

She had had ample opportunity for seeing that, to him, conventional propriety spelt fashionable frivolity, that forethought was only another word for faithlessness in Providence, and that any precision in dress was merely a phase of dandyism.

Then there were the eternal discussions on money matters, which widened the rifts and precipitated the disaster which was bound to come. There was really no element of stability in the marriage. To her at least there was no sacramental character in the relationship, and unless the impossible happened, shipwreck was bound to be made on one or other of the many rocks ahead.

It is, I think, only fair to Mr. Linton's memory to say that from his point of view he was quite as logical as she was from hers.

To a man of his temperament and convictions, clean tablecloths and the accurate adding-up of butchers' bills were matters of only secondary importance, if indeed of any importance at all. The highest duties of a faithful

servant and lover of humanity were not to be found in the observances of a decent domesticity; and to give to the well-being of one household only, albeit his own, the energies meant for humanity at large, was desertion and unfaithfulness.

Hence it was that the whole burden of the home and children was thrown upon her hands. Her literary work was disorganised, and on its disorganisation followed the inevitable loss of the income upon which they now mainly depended; for Mr. Linton, with his time and energies given up to politics, had but little left to give to money-making.

Everything was at sixes and sevens. The house was neglected and ill-conducted. Respectable servants could not be found to put up with the disorder; and inadequate servants made matters worse.

When Mr. Linton was at home, "the place was like an office with the coming and going" of innumerable coadjutors; and when he was away, as he often was, he billeted upon her "consecrated friends who continued the work and kept up the ball."

After two or three years, of which each succeeding one was more intolerable than the last, it became evident that the financial conditions demanded some drastic change in their mode of life.

The plate-glass window had not paid its way. The goods which it sampled were hardly, at least so far as the senior partner was concerned, being manufactured at all. And though the junior partner did her best, she could not, what with the burdens and worries that distracted her, produce sufficient to pay for the household needs.

By 1862 most of Mrs. Linton's savings were gone, and there was nothing for it but to adopt a cheaper mode of life. They therefore let the Leinster Square house and removed to Gang Moor House on Hampstead Heath, not far from "Jack Straw's Castle." Here Mrs. Craik, Sidney and Clarence Dobell were frequent visitors.

"We like Hampstead," she writes to Mrs. Berridge's sister, "a hundred times better for air and walks and locality than Leinster Square; but my pride is broken, and I do not like the

dirty, meanly furnished lodgings that we have like our beautiful London house."

The one bright spot in the miserable business was the devotion which Mrs. Linton showed to her stepchildren, and the affection with which she inspired them. On this point one of them, Mrs. Margaret Linton Mather, writes to me—

"To us Mrs. Linton was *from first to last* the 'true friend and mother' she always signed herself. My sister can remember no other mother. To her we could turn at any time, sure of sympathy and helpful, loving counsel."

Mr. W. E. Adams, who visited Mr. Linton and his children in America in 1882, and writes of him in his book, *Our American Cousins*, also tells me—

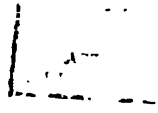
"His two daughters, both in conversation and in correspondence, spoke and wrote in the highest terms of Mrs. Linton. She had been, they said, a loving mother to them. Mrs. Linton was also, I know, a loving mother to the eldest girl, whom she took to live with her at Hampstead, where I remember visiting them."

To Mr. Linton the move from Leinster Square was a positive relief. The London experiment had been at best only a concession wrung from him on marriage. Sitting with his friend Mr. W. E. Adams in the smallest room of the big house, he had said, "All I want is this little room—the rest is a worry and an encumbrance"; and he was glad to be rid of it.

Then he fell to talking of his disenchantment. "Mr. Linton, you know," Mr. Adams writes, "was an ardent Republican; and he remained so to the end of his days. Well, he was disappointed. The explanation he gave me was that Mrs. Linton had not the same deep and ardent faith as he had. 'It is true,' he said, 'that she is enthusiastic about Garibaldi; but then she is just as enthusiastic about Lord Palmerston.' This was the view he gave me; but there were other things which cannot be mentioned."

The narrative of the immediately succeeding years is set forth in the following note by Mrs. Mather:—

"We returned," she writes, "to Bayswater in the spring of



BRANTWOOD

AS ENLARGED BY RUSKIN

1863, and remained there till the lease expired. It was in this year that *The Lake Country* was undertaken. My father and mother left London on May the 18th, and spent from then till August the 14th rambling through the Lake District and collecting material for the book. Among the many visitors at Leinster Square I remember the Rossetti brothers, Alfred Stevens the sculptor, W. Bell Scott, E. H. Wehnert, William Coleman, Alfred Holiday, and 'Mrs. Alexander,' whom we knew as Mrs. Hector. Dickens, Thackeray, Shirley Brooks, Walter Crane, Dr. John Epps, and Peter Taylor were also familiar names.

"In the spring of 1864, my father, to whom a city life was always irksome, took us back to the old home at Brantwood; and our mother, for whose work social life was a necessity, took rooms in Russell Place. But so long as we remained in the Lake Country, and until my father came to America in the autumn of 1867, she always rejoined us in the summer months. Several of her novels were written at Brantwood. *Lizzie Lorton* and *Grasp your Nettle* I am sure of being written there, from little incidents associated with them. At this time our eldest sister was about twenty years of age, and quite capable of looking after the household; but our mother was always ready and came to us at any time if needed, owing to illness among us; and how well I remember what a comfort she was at such a time, how untiring in her care! She had a wonderful magnetic power about her—I feel that it is impossible to express strongly enough how truly she was the mother to us all. Naturally she had her preferences, but we all felt that she tried not to show them, and that she was strictly *just* in her dealings with us all. Owing to our own mother's ill health, we had had but little training till she took us in hand, and it must have been no easy task she undertook."

Mr. Linton's retirement to Brantwood placed him out of touch with the London world, and, as a consequence, his business as a wood-engraver now declined even more rapidly than before.

Mrs. Linton, on the other hand, was in a better position to

prosecute her labours than she had been for some years, and her output again became regular.

Of the life at Brantwood we get a glimpse from some notes of a visit in 1865 kindly furnished by Miss Gedge, a niece of Mrs. Linton, to whom I am indebted for untiring help in this writing.

Coming, as she and her sister did, from a quiet Lincolnshire village, Brantwood nevertheless struck them as curiously lonely—no callers, no poor people about the roads. A gloomy drive led up to the house, which overlooked Coniston Lake. The only dwellings in sight were those of Coniston village, nestling at the foot of the Old Man Mountain, and half a mile away across the water. To Coniston Church by boat, to save the three miles journey by road, made Sundays days of remembrance. In the wild woods were raspberries and bilberries and an occasional snake gliding quickly out of sight, unused to disturbance. Other memories are the dinners distributed to the thinly scattered cottagers—for there was practical as well as theoretical sympathy with the poor neighbours; the exceedingly incompetent gardener, chosen by Mr. Linton because he had beautiful blue eyes; and the advent of a rare visitor—a great musician, and the gathering in the drawing-room to hear him play. "But if you come in you must not breathe," was the injunction. And one at least of the long row of little Gedges and Lintons, taking the injunction literally, came perilously near to bursting. Fortunately an unusually crescendo passage smashed a piano string, and the ordeal was over.

The following is a letter written about this time. The "new book" referred to is *Sowing the Wind.*

E. L. L. TO MRS. MOIR.

"BRANTWOOD, 1866.

"What to tell you of myself, dear love?—Nothing pleasant, nothing gracious. And is there any value in querulous complaints? I could fill this sheet with them, but I doubt if your true woman's heart would love me as much after as you did

before! It sounds so harsh, so unwomanly, for a wife not to feel perfect happiness in her husband's society—and especially after such a long separation—and especially again when the husband loves personally as much as mine loves me; but I am *not* happy here, and never shall be now as one of the Linton family. The real main cord is broken, and all the little threads that bind us together now are of worth only because of their number, but not one has the strength of a hair! The Love, the Home, the Motherhood, the Matronship —all, all have gone—died—and will never wake up to life again! and yet I long for love and I pine for a home!

"I am working at my new book, and have written three chapters of it. The *Saturday* sent me down by post Mrs. Wood's last novel, *Elster's Folly*, to review, and I could not but cut it up. I have cut up every book I have had from them, save *A Life's Love*, by a Scottish writer, I opine. I cannot help it! If they send me trash, I must in my quality of faithful critic say that it is trash, and abuse the writers for putting forth such rubbish. Mrs. Wood is to me a very, very shallow writer, a shallow observer of society, and a puerile and a vulgar one, and I have said so. But still this does not give *me* a good review, which would be more to the purpose! I wish I had had a good review, then—there has been some reason why I have not."

At length matters became desperate, and in 1867 Mr. Linton suddenly announced his determination to try his fortunes in America. He first went out alone, leaving his children at boarding-schools, and under Mrs. Linton's care. By the next year he had settled upon a home, and they followed.

Then came the question whether Mrs. Linton was also to expatriate herself.

At first there had been no thought of final separation. From the financial point of view, life in England for Mr. Linton and his children had become an impossibility, and remunerative work had to be found elsewhere. For some years Mrs. Linton had only been an occasional visitor in her husband's house. The family life to which she had grown so pleasantly accustomed, so far as her intercourse

with the children was concerned, was ended. These children, who had become as dear to her as if they had been her own, had been withdrawn from her influence, and Mr. Linton had plainly expressed his opinion that the old treatment of them was to his taste. And, after all, they were his and not hers. So far as they were concerned, then, it was clearly better that they should not be again exposed to the storms and dissensions which were inevitable in a household where the heads were not at one. She felt that she had ceased to be of use to them, and that her renewed presence would only be a hindrance.

Concerning this time Mrs. Mather writes to me—

"There never was any definite separation between her and my father. In regard to the matter she herself wrote to me, 'We separated on incompatibility. Tastes, temper, and mode of life were all contrary one to the other.' But though they lived with the Atlantic between them, they corresponded, and for years we hoped that she would be induced to join us in the New World."

And again—

". . . Incompatibility is the one and *only* word that expresses the cause of their living apart — I will not say separation.

"All who knew my dear mother knew her warm, impulsive temper. She had a sharp, quick tongue, which her heart and actions contradicted the next moment. My father was slow to speak, and *intensely* reserved."

So it was that they drifted apart, and though they both survived for thirty years, they never met again.

Mrs. Linton put such resources as she had at her husband's service for paying his debts before leaving England, and although it is not true, as reported, that she made him a regular allowance, she constantly gave him and his children generous pecuniary assistance.

"What a little goose you are!" wrote one of her relations, who did not approve of what appeared to him a quixotic generosity. "Do you intend to be a little pigeon all your life for Skimpoles to pluck?"

But the somewhat involved metaphor did not move her from the decision she had come to, and she would not repudiate her obligations. She blamed herself for having been so foolish as to incur them at all, but she would not allow that the scantiness of the value received in any way exonerated her.

Regarding Mr. Linton in America, Mr. Adams writes—

"I spent a few weeks with him at Appledore near New-Haven in 1882 (as recorded in a little book I printed—*Our American Cousins*). There he lived the same secluded life he had led at Brantwood—busy with his engravings and his books (which latter he printed and bound himself)."

CHAPTER X

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR AND E. L. L.

IN the last two chapters I have judged it best to confine myself to Mrs. Linton's domestic affairs to the exclusion of contemporary matters, which, though significant and interesting in themselves, were yet, by the side of her marriage, of secondary importance.

We must now retrace our steps.

It cannot be doubted that the change which had taken place in Eliza Lynn's condition was not without its bearing on the crowning misfortune which, in the very year of her marriage, came to her friend and "father," Walter Savage Landor, a misfortune which Mrs. Linton always believed might have been averted had she "still been able to visit him, and make his lodgings his home, as in olden times."

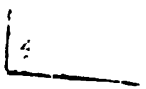
"About this time," she writes, "my dear old father-friend, Walter Savage Landor, made the second great blunder of his life, and had to pay the penalty. The law is no respecter of persons; and those who vault unbidden into the seat of justice have to suffer by the sword they have wielded without authority.

"Into the merits of this painful case I will not enter. All I know is the fatal result; and the only defence I make—and to my mind it is all-powerful—is, that age obscures the clearness of the mental vision as it does that of the physical, and that if to those who love much much may be forgiven, those whose vigorous youth has been pure and flawless may hope for the reverent veiling of oblivion when they make an octogenarian mistake.

"Mr. Landor left Bath, and went back to his own family

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

FROM THE BUST PRESENTED BY HIM TO CHARLES DICKENS



and the old home he once loved so well at beautiful Florence; and I never saw him again."

This was one of the bitterest sorrows of Mrs. Linton's life, and, coming as it did at a time when she was beginning clearly to realise the great blunder she had made in marrying, it was well-nigh overwhelming. Not only had she taken an irrevocable step which had not been justified by the event, but by so doing she had rendered herself incapable of averting misfortune from her best and dearest friend.

Those who are familiar with Landor's *Imaginary Conversations* will remember that in "Epicurus, Leontion, and Ternissa" he assumes the rôle of Epicurus, who discourses, sometimes playfully, sometimes seriously, with his two girl-pupils. The entire subject of the dialogue is the platonic intercourse of the philosopher (representing Landor himself) with two handsome young girls of twenty and sixteen (Leontion and Ternissa), to whom he shows his newly-planted garden two or three miles from Athens, and explains, while he practises the principles of, his philosophy. This may have been all very well with Greek philosophers, Greek girls, and Greek surroundings—though that is open to question—but transplanted to Bath and practised amidst the surroundings of modern proprieties and modern scandal-mongering, it was not without disadvantages and complications.

Unfortunately, towards the end of 1857, differences arose between the Bath representatives of Leontion and Ternissa, and Landor flung himself headlong into the strife. "Believing here," writes Forster, "as at every quarrel in which he had ever been engaged, that he saw on one side a fiend incarnate, and on the other an angel of light, he permitted that astounding credulity to work his irascibility into madness; and there was then as much good to be got by reasoning with him as by arguing with a storm at Cape Horn. . . . He rejected every warning, rushed into print, and found himself enmeshed in an action for libel. On hearing this, I proceeded to Bath, and he was extricated for a time; but I quitted the place with a sorrowful misgiving that the last illness of the old man, while it had left him subject to the same transitory fits of frantic passion, had permanently also weakened him

mentally yet more than bodily. . . . He had not now even memory enough to recollect what he was writing from day to day; and while the power of giving keen and clear expression to every passing mood of bitterness remained to him, his reason had too far deserted him to leave it other than a fatal gift."

The danger was temporarily averted, and in the interval the old man was not unmindful of the fortunes of his beloved "daughter." Referring to her engagement, he writes—

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR TO E. L.

"[BATH,] *2nd February* 1858.

"MY DEAR ELIZA,—Yesterday I met Miss Hughes and Dr. Brabant. Both of them asked me whether I had heard from you lately—they had not. This morning I am relieved from anxiety by your letter from Manchester. Never was one more welcome, even of yours. Little as I am curious about the affairs of others, and least of all about my own, I am somewhat more than anxious, I am deeply interested, in everything concerning your welfare! So I have no hesitation in asking, and I am confident you will have none in answering, my questions. I know that Mr. Linton's genius commands prosperity. But *c'est le premier pas qui coûte.* You must not start but from vantage ground. Doctor Brabant told me what grieved me: that, in accordance with your father's will, you lose on your marriage all he left you. This is such an excess of cruelty and injustice as I neither am willing nor able to believe. Tell me how it really is, and also tell me whether Mr. Linton has disposed of Brantwood to his satisfaction. On the first of April I shall receive my quarterly remittance, out of which I have only to pay thirty pounds for lodgings and servants, and ten to a poor pensioner of my sister. You see clearly that there will be something more than I ought to spend upon myself, and more than I will. Therefore do not be perverse and proud, but permit me to send you twenty in the beginning of April. Stick it on the horn of the honey-moon before it goes: I mean the moon, not the money.

"The snow is falling fast. When it snows I find it difficult

to keep my eyes away from it, either to read or write. A lady less polite and kind would say to herself, 'God bless the snow, then!' I say quite as heartily, 'God save Eliza!'

"HER OLD FATHER."

Sending her money again out of his slender income, he says—

"We must not either of us be too proud on these matters. We both have somewhat better to be proud of—I chiefly in being called by you FATHER."

And again—

W. S. LANDOR TO E. L.

"[BATH,] 19*th March* 1858.

"DEAR ELIZA,—I have been waiting very anxiously for the letter I received from you this morning. Tell me, without loss of a single day, to what address I may send the shabby trifle you at last have permitted me to offer on your marriage. God grant it may be as happy as I believe it will be. Everybody speaks highly of Mr. Linton. If he should become as rich as Rothschild or Lord Westminster, you must encourage him not to desert his noble art in 'three or four years.' I was amused at your expression, 'He works wickedly.' You believe you are original; you are only classical. Virgil steps before you with his *labor improbus*. Do not be fastidious about furniture. Oh, had you seen Ipsley Court![1] The chairs were Charles the Second's time —the beds about Queen Anne's. You would have believed them made expressly for a spaniel and her family, a favourite and fat one, unable to jump up higher than eighteen inches. But what a width! I suspect the whole furniture of eleven or twelve rooms was sold for somewhat less than £100! excepting one Chinese cabinet and one marble table. The mirrors may have been large enough to reflect the whole of the face—they were only in the bedrooms, eight or nine of them. Some had been gilt, but mine was not. I confess I like really old furniture, even if it is faded.—Ever your affectionate FATHER."

"Love to my son."

[1] Still the seat of the Landor family.

When she had been married two months he wrote—

W. S. LANDOR TO E. L. L.

"[BATH,] 29*th May* 1858.

"MY DEAR DAUGHTER,—The seldomer I write to you the more I think of you. Nothing on earth is so precious to me as your affection. It grieves me to find by your letter that your very interesting boy[1] is in slender health. I was myself so at his age: and was laught (*sic*) at by my Rugby schoolfellows, who were somewhat older and stronger, until I fought two battles with my little white fists, and was victorious over their red. Learning I hated; but a cousin, afterwards captain of the *Calypso*, one year my senior, sometimes prompted me and sometimes quizzed me. Suddenly I formed a resolution to get before him, and I studdied (*sic*) secretly in the playhours, making it a rule to learn a dozen Latin words in the dictionary every day. At the end of two years I had gained a *remove* and left my cousin behind. At twelve I wrote Latin verses—one of them happened to be so good that the master took me by the ear and asked me good-naturedly where I stole it, really believing I had done so. I do believe that moderate study is conducive to health. As I always slept a little after dinner, I required less in bed and was never so perfectly awake as during the first hours of night.

"And now let me assure you that I red (*sic*) with delight your paper in the *Household Words*—a publication which will give more information and delight than any ever excited before. I have now written til (*sic*) I am weary. Yesterday I drove out for two hours and felt the better for it. I shall do the same to-day.

"God bless you and yours. W. S. L."

As I have said, the trouble which threatened Landor at the end of 1857 was only postponed. Notwithstanding Forster's repeated opposition, he proceeded to arrange for the publication behind his friend's back of a collection of the sweepings and refuse of his writing-desk. The book was called *Dry Sticks Fagotted*, and in it he seized the

[1] Lancelot, one of her stepchildren.

opportunity of publishing in other forms the objectionable passages on the erasure of which Forster had originally insisted, and which he should have felt himself bound in loyalty never to revive. The result was another action for libel.

"The blow," writes his biographer, "fell at last so suddenly that I only heard of what had been determined after the resolution was taken. Told by his law-advisers that the matter complained of was such that an adverse verdict must be expected, and that the damages would necessarily be heavier because of the breach of an undertaking which they had themselves given in his name upon my interference in the previous year—a plan at that time started, and only then at my suggestion abandoned, was at the same interview put before Landor, and eagerly assented to. This was, that he should place his property beyond seizure for damages, break up his house in Bath, sell his pictures, and return to Italy. There was no time to lose if such a scheme were to be carried out successfully; and it was with supreme astonishment I received an intimation, telegraphed at midday from Bath on the 12th of July 1858, that Landor would be at my house in London that night, accompanied by one of his nieces. Some friends were dining with me, among them Mr. Dickens, who, on the arrival of the old man, too fatigued by his journey to be able to join the dinner-table, left the room to see him; and from another friend, the Rev. Mr. Elwin, who was also one of the party, I received very lately a letter reminding me of what occurred. I thought that Landor would talk over with him the unpleasant crisis; and I shall never forget my amazement when Dickens came back into the room laughing, and said that he found him very jovial, and that his whole conversation was upon the character of Catullus, Tibullus, and other Latin poets." He crossed to France four days later, on the morning of the 15th of July, and his friends in England never saw him again.

The following letter—the only one from Forster found amongst Mrs. Linton's papers — is interesting. Certain portions I have suppressed, as they might prove painful to persons now living.

JOHN FORSTER TO E. L. L.

"46 MONTAGU SQUARE, *26th August* 1858.

"MY DEAR MRS. LINTON,—It is very sad—and I am as helpless as yourself, though not less anxious than yourself to do what yet I feel is hardly to be done.

". . . If I can get any reasonable grounds on which to make a brief public statement—I will do it. I have also written to Mr. Landor's nieces and to Captain B——, but as yet my letters are without reply.

". . . There is a peculiarity in the case which renders any direct defence of our poor old friend impossible.

". . . As soon as I saw the outcry begin (which I confess I did not anticipate), I took measures to get a generous promise of silence from the *Globe* and other papers, and have made to-day the same appeal to the literary papers, the *Athenæum*, etc., and the *Examiner* and the *Spectator*.

". . . The saddest thing remains, that the occurrence should have taken place at all. The worst evil is nevertheless not without its admixture of good in this mystery of a world. And I pray now that our noble old Landor (from whom everything less noble than himself will soon fall off and be forgotten) may live quietly the rest of his days in Italy, and die with his children.

"With kind regards to Mr. Linton and yourself (in which my wife would join very sincerely if she were at home), I am, my dear Mrs. Linton, ever most truly yours,

"JOHN FORSTER."

One of Landor's most intimate Bath friends writes to me—

"I may tell you there were several reasons why a defence to the action was made so difficult, one being that after Mr. Forster and myself had *gone down on our knees* to implore Landor not to publish any more philippics or speak on the matter to anybody, he was led into doing so by some indiscreet tattlers, who knew both parties and doubtless carried the sayings of one to the other; and when his medical advisers gave as their opinion that 'it would kill Mr. Landor to go into court and try to justify himself,' you

will, I am sure, understand fully how complex and difficult the whole affair was."

From this time until his death in 1864, Landor lived in Italy. For these six years Mrs. Lynn Linton acted as a sort of amateur literary agent for him, seeing to the publication of a belated "Imaginary Conversation" or two, lengthy letters on Italian politics, and the aftermath of his poetic genius. Most of these *disjecta membra* have been collected and republished in the last few years by Mr. Stephen Wheeler.

Through Mrs. Linton and Thornton Hunt, the irrepressible old man attempted to effect the printing and circulating of the pamphlet now much sought after by Landor collectors, entitled *Mr. Landor's Remarks on a Suit preferred against him at the Summer Assizes in Taunton*, 1858, *illustrating the Appendix to his Hellenics*. This was in the nature of a defence of his conduct. Its temper may be gathered from the following choice sentence:—"I know not whether the husband infected the wife, or the wife the husband, with the virulent and incurable pustules of mendacity, or whether the distemper is in the blood of both, breaking out in all quarters and at all seasons."

He desired them to have this precious production inserted in the public press as an advertisement, if admission could not be obtained on any other terms! As far as I can gather, they wisely refused to have anything to do with the matter. Eventually he entrusted it to Mr. G. J. Holyoake, who gives an interesting account of its publication in *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, 1892, vol. ii. chap. lix.

On the face of it, it was grossly libellous, and no newspaper would have dared to risk its publication. It was therefore generous, though surely unwise, of Mr. Holyoake to abet his friend in what was nothing less than a very serious contempt of court. Here is a sentence or two on the subject from his most interesting book. "I had Landor's manuscript," he writes, "copied in my own house, so that no printer should by chance see the original manuscript in the office. My brother Austen, whom in all these things I could trust as I

could trust myself, set up and printed with his own hands Landor's defence, so that none save he and I ever saw the pamphlet until the post delivered copies at their destination. A reward of £200 was offered for the discovery of the printer, without result. Twelve years later, Landor being then dead, I told Lord Houghton I was the printer of his 'defence,' but until this day I have mentioned it to no one else." A copy of the flimsy little pamphlet was sold in 1899 for the sum of £10.

It is sad enough for us at this distance of time to contemplate the "Old Lion" in his dotage, with no one at hand to control, no one even with whom he could in conversation ease the dangerous effervescence of his brain.

How much more sad must it have appeared to Mrs. Linton. It was an intolerable fortuity that her marriage, futile as it was, should have withdrawn her from his companionship just at a moment when she might have been of incalculable service in saving him from himself.

This, too, was Landor's own feeling. He told Mr. Browning in the first year of his flight to Italy, that he was wholly unfit to fend for himself, and he was evidently aware that he was hardly answerable for his actions in his less lucid moments. "I wish," he writes to Mrs. Linton at this time, "I wish I could be near you for the remainder of my life." But the fates were against it, and the brave life was destined to flicker out, tended, it is true, by those who were kindly and disinterested, but divorced from those for whom he had the deepest affection.

"Some fruit the old tree had yet to shed"—some intervals of intellectual activity were yet vouchsafed to him. These things are demonstrated in the last chapter of the *Life*. Above all, he was, as will be seen from the following selection from the large number of hitherto unpublished letters written to his "daughter," still loyal in friendship, generous to a fault, and mindful of the difficulties and troubles of others.

From the first it will be seen that he is still discovering "masterpieces" of art and full of his old enthusiastic credulity.

W. S. LANDOR TO E. L. L.

"FLORENCE, 1860.

"MY DEAR DAUGHTER,—A Sunday can never be more properly employed than in an expression of thanks for a kind action. Three days have nearly elapsed since I received your letter, and yesterday I was devising the means of paying you for the photographs, though your delicacy would not allow you to tell me what they cost. I must lose not a single hour in putting the money in the hands of a correspondent of him in whose shop I have dealings for wine and chocolate, one Townley, desiring him to be expeditious. I intend to send two fine pictures, a Salvator and a Bronzino, for sale in London. Phillips, I hear, is the best auctioneer for this purpose. Tell me where his residence is. Many good judges have thought that the one which is attributed to Bronzino is really by Michael Angelo. It represents the Last Judgment —it is six feet long and four high. It was a present from Cardinal Pacca to Bishop Baynes. The condition is perfect. I think there is scarcely a finer picture in existence. I think I will also add a picture of Carracci representing Christ and St. Peter on the coast of Galilee. This has no frame. It was in a very fine one, sold to a dealer from Leghorn and sent by him to England. It is as long as the above but not so high by a foot. Its value is much less.

"Our winter here has been more foggy and frosty than any one I remember in Bath during the twenty-five years I spent there. Yesterday the rain fell in torrents.

"I know not what money the pictures will produce. Whatever it may be, you shall have one half of it. This you must not hesitate to accept, because it may serve to buy a few books and playthings for the children.

"Do not tire yourself by writing a long letter for this tedious one of mine.

"Ever your affectionate father, with kind regards to your husband and children. Tell the auctioneer to place *all* the money in your hands. You may send me my share."

And again—

W. S. LANDOR TO E. L. L.

"*5th June* 1860.

". . . I told you in one of my last letters, that yours must never be prepaid, for I am the richer of the two, and can

very well and very willingly afford a few pence. I am now beginning to read the plays of Shakespeare for the third time. His other works I never could read twice, and hardly once quite through. Schleghel (*sic*) is the only critic worthy of him, and Schleghel 'loves not wisely but too well' in some places; in others it is impossible to love him enough.

"With kindest regards to your good husband, believe me, your affectionate FATHER."

In the following extract from a letter to Mrs. Linton, Landor refers to an Imaginary Conversation in Italian between Savonarola and the Prior of San Marco. "It formed," says Mr. Wheeler, "a small octavo pamphlet of seven pages; and the proceeds of the sale were to be given for the relief of Garibaldi's wounded followers." The date would therefore seem to be about May or June 1860.

W. S. LANDOR TO E. L. L.

" . . . She (Mrs. West) will be sadly grieved to hear that your health is failing. But you have many years before you, and a sense of duty towards those you love will keep you alive much longer than a dissipated life would, which happily you never tried. However, you must not wear yourself away with literary labours. I have done with it. My 'Savonarola' is my last work. Field of Boston will begin to print my writings in a complete edition next year. He will not be able to send me any volume of them. I may perhaps live through the winter or nearly through. Beyond that time I neither expect nor wish to stay on earth — under it in preference."

In July he wrote—

W. S. LANDOR TO E. L. L.

" . . . Thanks and thanks again for the capital work which contains my letters to Kossuth and Garibaldi. I hope this vigorous publication will enjoy the long life it promises. Am I mistaken in my suspicion that I trace my own dear

daughter's hand in it? The article which relates to the genius and powers of women is hardly fair. You know my estimate of your writings, and not only for their purity of style but for their vigorous intellect. What does the author think of Madame de Staël and Mrs. Stowe? The last book I have been reading I have read a second time; it is *The Minister's Wooing*. It should have left off at the marriage of the young lovers, but no *man* alive has given the world a novel so excellent. It is generally thought that the ancients were less complimentary to women of genius than the moderns. The poetry of Sappho and some others was extolled by them. The two odes of the tawny Lesbian are quoted by Longinus and admirably translated. 'Blest as the immortal gods is he,' etc. Mrs. Hemans has written much better poetry, and more kinds than one, but especially in her 'Casa Bianca' (*sic*) and 'Ivan.' I doubt whether any short pieces in our language are comparable to these, excepting Campbell's 'Hohenlinden' and 'Battle of the Baltic.' Some years ago I turned over the whole of Brunck's Greek *Anthologia*, and was vext at finding so little of thought or imagination. I refreshed myself by a draught of the Anapos, and roving with Theocritus among the fresh flowers of Enna. The Greeks never overload, but too often drive dull oxen yoked to an empty crate. Anacreon has composed one exquisite song, fairly worth all the *Anthologia*.

"The rest are mostly inferior. An older man than old Anacreon may be expected to write worse; on the other side I will give you a proof, with my blessing to all you love."

Overleaf were the poems, "The Poet who sleeps" and "The Poet wide awake." They are published in Mr. Stephen Wheeler's *Letters and Unpublished Writings of Landor*, 1897.

From the above it will be seen that through Mrs. Linton's agency Landor had got two of his open letters published. Amongst other writings which she did not succeed in disposing of were the poem, "To Nice, the birthplace of Garibaldi," and the Imaginary Conversation, "Milo and Pio Nono." Both of these have been rescued from oblivion by Mr. Wheeler. One Imaginary Conversation I have found amongst her papers which has never seen the light. It is called "Mama and her son Charles." It was despatched from Florence on October the 30th with the following note:—

"My dearest daughter, I wanted to write you a long letter, but can only send this Imaginary Conversation. Will not your publisher give you something for it? I have kept no legible copy."

That the MS. went to one publisher at least and was refused is pretty evident, for I found amongst Mrs. Linton's papers both the original and a copy in her handwriting, the latter much creased by passage through the post. It is, of course, tempting to publish anything of Landor's; but after careful consideration I have decided in this case to forbear. To present to mere idle curiosity so futile and inconclusive a production of senility would, it seems to me, be no less than an outrage on a great man's memory.

In the year 1862 was published the pamphlet, *Letters of a Canadian*, which is the despair of the Landor collector. Not a single copy is now known to be in existence. Indeed, the only evidence of its publication at all is to be found in three of Landor's private letters. In one of them he acknowledges its receipt, and requests that copies may be sent to Mrs. Lynn Linton, Kenneth Mackenzie, and Monckton Milnes.

Landor's dictum in the following letter that "we are unable to believe by wishing it," recalls to my mind a somewhat curious circumstance. Shortly before Mrs. Linton's death, a very similar point was under discussion between us, suggested by the remarks of a young friend, who was exceedingly dogmatic upon the articles of her creed. In the course of our conversation I happened to say, what of course is old enough and seemed to me very obvious, that our young friend was unable to see the difference between faith and knowledge, and that knowledge was just the very thing which faith does not connote. The two conditions were in fact inconsistent. If we know, faith is superfluous. If we say we have faith we confess in the same breath that we do not know. In the one case we give credit on the authority of others; in the other we are satisfied by our own perception.[1] Mrs. Linton was

[1] I am aware that this is somewhat crudely put, and that it is of necessity an incomplete statement on a difficult subject; but it is substantially what was said, and must stand only as a snippet of passing conversation.

delighted, and said, "Well, I never thought of that before. Of course there is all the difference in the world."

After her death I had occasion to re-read or glance over most of her novels, and in one of them, to my surprise, I found the very distinction drawn between faith and knowledge which I have given above, and which she had taken from me as something new and hitherto unappreciated.

W. S. LANDOR TO E. L. L.

"*12th May* '62.

"MY DEAREST DAUGHTER,—I have always more to say to you than to any other, for I am more interested in you. Here will be enclosed a short letter which you will forward to Mrs. West. I do wish you could spend a few weeks with her on the Forest: it would strengthen you. Read my letter to her before you send it. Never trouble your head about things unintelligible. We are unable to believe by wishing it. The first things we are taught are lies; so are almost all the following, through life. Children, while they are half asleep, are to repeat a belief of things they never thought about. They are terrified lest their tender limbs should have to undergo a fire that no housemaid could put out. . . . It is pleasant to believe in a future state, provided we are allowed to sit at a good distance from the fire. But how shall we recognise one another? Even you in crinoline would puzzle me. And on seeing my long grey beard[1] you would say, as Rose's little girl said after looking at me and after my asking her what she thought of me, 'I think you are a very ugly man.' One loved me at twenty, another at twenty-five—none between, and none wanted I—but I think it unlikely that either would know me again out of my Hessian boots, short *breeches*, silk stockings, and embroidered waistcoat, having on a pointed hat an ell long."

In the winter of 1863, Lancelot, Mrs. Linton's favourite stepson, died.

[1] Referring to his having given up shaving in Italy, Mr. Browning wrote to John Forster, "If you could only see how well he looks in his curly white beard." And in "The Poet wide awake" he himself speaks of his "horrid brake of wintry beard."

On hearing of the boy's death, Landor, himself not far from the "hour implored so long in vain," wrote—

W. S. LANDOR TO E. L. L.

"Indeed, indeed, I do partake in your affliction, my dear daughter. It is now thirty-two entire days since I have suffered by the bronchitis, not caring, as I never did, whether I was to live or die. It seems I may go on living. My cough is quieter and almost over. You will want more money than ordinarily, and I happen to have more than I want—so you ought to find no difficulty in accepting two small bank notes. I do trust they will not fall into the hands of thieves. The numbers are 53686 and 17369.

"And now take rest and repose. I need not say, tell good Mr. Linton that I condole with him.—Your affectionate

"FATHER."

Towards the close of the following year, Landor is described by those living in Italy as being but the wreck of himself, and on the 17th of September 1864 he breathed his last.

Of course this is not the place to attempt an appreciation of this remarkable man. At the same time, it may not be altogether impertinent to warn a generation of readers which knows him not, that a grievous wrong will be done if he is any way judged by the scant glimpses here caught of him in his decline.

In this book he is only of importance by reason of his friendship with Mrs. Linton, and it is with him in that character alone that we are justified in concerning ourselves.

CHAPTER XI

LITERARY WORK—1858–1867

WE will now return to the literary side of Mrs. Linton's life, which, for greater convenience, has been practically ignored in the last few chapters.

In 1858 she started as a regular contributor to the *Literary Gazette*, of which Shirley Brooks, her firm friend to the end of his life, was then editor.

In 1859 I find from her work-book that she wrote seventy-four book reviews for the *Literary Gazette*, seven articles for the *National Magazine*, eleven articles for *Household Words* and its successor, *All the Year Round*, three articles for the *Athenæum*, in which I fancy this was the first year of her appearance, and two articles in *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*; in all ninety-seven articles, or an average of nearly two a week.

The following table will show at a glance her output of articles from 1860 to 1867. With the books written during this period we shall deal separately.

Year.	Names of Periodicals.	Number of Articles.
1860	All the Year Round, London Review, Athenæum, Literary Gazette, Cornhill Magazine.	62
1861	All the Year Round, London Review, Temple Bar.	47
1862	All the Year Round, London Review, Temple Bar, Monday Review.	24
1863	All the Year Round, Temple Bar.	9
1864	All the Year Round, London Society.	13
1865	All the Year Round, Temple Bar, London Society, Daily News, Watch Tower.	21
1866	All the Year Round, Athenæum, Temple Bar, Saturday Review.	32
1867	All the Year Round, Temple Bar, Saturday Review, Tinsley's Magazine, Examiner, St. Paul's.	25

From this table it will at once be seen how disastrously marriage and domestic cares were affecting her literary work. From the year 1859 with its ninety-seven to the year 1863 with its beggarly nine articles, the descent was indeed startling, and, as has been pointed out, the resulting loss of income went far towards bringing matters to a crisis.

From it we also see that by the year 1863 she had lost touch with all the editors for whom she had been regularly working, with the sole exception of Charles Dickens. Indeed, had it not been for *All the Year Round*, her literary output for this year would have been just one article in *Temple Bar*.

All the Year Round, it will be remembered by those familiar with the life of Dickens, was the magazine which had been started by him in 1859 after the dispute with Messrs. Bradbury & Evans, which had resulted in the discontinuance of *Household Words*. Mrs. Linton, who had been a regular contributor to the latter, was, immediately on its abandonment, approached by the editor of *Once a Week*, Messrs. Bradbury & Evans's new illustrated venture. Here she found herself on the horns of a dilemma. Either she must refuse what was a valuable offer or run the risk of appearing disloyal to Dickens, to whom, as we have seen, she had much reason to be grateful.

She thereupon wrote to him explaining the situation, and asking whether he saw any objection to her writing for the opposition periodical. Dickens, who undoubtedly felt very bitter on the subject of the rival publication, replied that she could not write too much for *All the Year Round;* that whatever she wrote for him would as a matter of course be warmly welcomed; and that her contributions should always have precedence in his magazine. He said that he looked upon himself as her editor of right, and made it perfectly clear that any commerce with the opposition would be regarded as a personal injury.

Of course such a reply was very gratifying, and forthwith she became his faithful lieutenant and refused all the tempting offers of his rivals.

The following is one of the few letters from him that I find amongst her papers. The book referred to is *Commons*

and King, and her review of it appeared in *All the Year Round* for 26th May 1860.

CHARLES DICKENS TO E. L. L.

"TAVISTOCK HOUSE, TAVISTOCK SQUARE, LONDON,
Thursday, 26th April 1860.

"MY DEAR MRS. LINTON,—I think you may like to write a narrative of this book, with the general purpose of showing that if kings will *not* be honest and true, and *will* be shifty and shuffling, they must take the consequences (when they fall) like mere men. You will see that Charles the First is clearly shown to have set upon the House of Commons with a marvellously evil and deep design.—Ever affectionately,

"C. D."

Regarding Mrs. Linton's letters to Charles Dickens, which must have been of exceptional interest, I am disappointed to learn from Miss Hogarth, his executrix, that they have all been destroyed. I am indebted to this lady for her generous permission to print one or two of the great writer's letters. My only regret is that I cannot enrich these pages with more of them.

The following fragment will be read with interest. The book referred to is doubtless Mrs. Gordon's *Christopher North:* a memoir of John Wilson compiled from family papers and other sources, by his daughter. The review appeared in *All the Year Round* on 29th November 1862.

CHARLES DICKENS TO W. H. WILLS

"*11th November* 1862.

". . . Will you tell Mrs. Linton that, in looking over her admirable account (*most* admirable) of Mrs. Gordon's book, I have taken out the references to Lockhart; not because I in the least doubt their justice, but because I knew him and he liked me, and because, one bright day in Rome, I walked about with him for some hours when he was dying fast, and all the old faults had faded out of him, and the mere ghost of the handsome man I had first known when Scott's daughter was at the head of his house had little more to do with this

world than she in her grave, or Scott in his, or little Hugh Littlejohn in his. Lockhart had been anxious to see me all the previous day (when I was away in the Campagna), and as we walked about I knew very well that *he* knew very well why. He talked of getting better, but I never saw him again. This makes me stay Mrs. Linton's hand, gentle as it is."

Notwithstanding their long literary connection, Mrs. Linton saw but little of her great contemporary. Writing on the subject to Mr. F. G. Kitton, she said—

"I did not know him intimately, and my business relations with *All the Year Round* as well as *Household Words* were conducted with Mr. Henry Wills. I first saw Mr. Dickens in private at Mr. Landor's at Bath. He and John Forster came down to dinner when I was staying with the dear old man, and we had, I remember, a delightful evening. Dickens was sweet and kind and gay with me. Forster was snubbing and satirical. I was then about twenty-four years old or perhaps older. When my father died I sold the house, Gad's Hill House, to Charles Dickens." (This was as executrix: she was the only unmarried daughter at the time.) "I used to go to Mr. Dickens's parties, etc., with all the rest of the world, but I never saw Gad's Hill again when it was his. He used to always say I must go down, but as no time was fixed I did not go."

An amusing fact connected with the sale of Gad's Hill is that Dickens disputed the charge of £40 for the timber. The point was referred to an arbitrator, who valued it at £70, by which the "Inimitable" was £30 out of pocket, in addition probably to the fees of the valuer.

Mention has been made of Mrs. Linton's "work-book," and this will be as good an opportunity as any to refer to a curious habit which she had at this time formed, and which intimately connects itself with, and illustrates, the unhappy period through which she was now passing.

At the beginning of each year she would cut out some little engraving which took her fancy (generally a piece of Mr. Linton's work, of which she would find proofs littered about his rooms), and stick it on the first page of her diary. At first she would seem to have done this merely as a

GADSHILL HOUSE

pleasant conceit, anticipating by her choice the probable events of the year; but by degrees, as she herself confessed, she came to regard the little pictures with something of superstition.

The first of these (for 1859) which lies before me is a pretty little scene of domesticity, and round it she has written, "The beginning of my new home and my happy motherhood, Loughton and the first year of Leinster Square." This was of course the obvious anticipation of the newly wedded wife. In 1860 there is a beautifully engraved vignette of the rose, the thistle, and the shamrock, under which she has written, "Our great hopes of fame and work." Here we have the "plate-glass window" fully dressed. In 1861, some drooping snowdrops with the legend, "The winter of discontent beginning." In 1862, some mountaineers, with the legend, "Our Hampstead time and projected journeying," referring to the arrangement come to this year with her husband to collaborate in the book on the Lake Country, he as illustrator and she as writer, in preparation for which they carried out elaborate excursions. This is the first case in which she would seem to have discovered grounds for the superstition which she afterwards attached to these yearly frontispieces, for the little picture chosen at haphazard justified its selection as the year went on, and the legend was added after it had so justified itself.

In 1863 the prophetic character of the circular wood-engraving used is very striking. It represents Œnone weeping over the dead body of Paris. Linton's name appears as engraver. This year, as we have seen, her favourite stepson died, and the frontispiece tragically justified its selection. The legend runs, "Lance died, and great sorrow at home." Here we have absolute proof that the selection of what may be called the pictorial motto for the year was made before the event to which it was afterwards held to refer, for Lancelot Linton did not die until the end of 1863. Whatever Mrs. Linton's idea had been when she started this practice in the first instance, it is perfectly clear that from henceforth she postponed the adding of the legend until time gave the solution. I am not suggesting for a moment that here was a

mystery worthy the attention of the Psychical Society. There is nothing at all surprising in the fact that any picture chosen haphazard should find its colourable counterpart among the occurrences in any given year of a fairly eventful life. What is of interest is the fact that Mrs. Linton, like many others who fancy themselves wholly materialistic, should have allowed herself to be credulously impressed by what was so easily explainable. Her character was full of glaring inconsistencies; which inconsistencies, it may be added, were far from making her less lovable to those who cherished her friendship as one of their best possessions.

Here are a few more examples of these pictorial oracles.

For 1864 she has chosen a very beautiful little vignette woodcut in which Robinson Crusoe sits wrapt in meditation, the very picture of bereavement and isolation. The added legend is, "W. J. L. went to Brantwood and loneliness."

For 1866, a painful engraving of the dead Christ, with the legend, "General melancholy and disappointment. The Christ indeed dead—the Christ of love and happiness, but the angel of love and pity still lingers at the tomb."

For 1867, a medallion designed and engraved by Linton, representing a fallen knight with shattered lance and shield, surrounded by the engraved motto, "Malo mori quam fœdari." To this she has added the words, "Gypsey's broken life and the ruin of all my home with W. J. L."

For 1868, a tailpiece of ravelled forest undergrowth, with the inscription, "America and its seductions with W. J. L. Entanglement of feeling and affairs with me."

For 1869, a woman sitting lonely and sad at a window, inscribed, "The girls gone to America and I left alone, sitting by the window watching, mourning, regretting—without hope."

The above are enough for our purpose, recording as they do the moods in which she summed up the years preceding the return to an independent existence. It need only be added that in 1870 I find a curious confirmation of the fact that the frontispieces were first pasted in and the legends attached later; for in this year the legend is written in violet ink, whereas the book is posted up to August in black ink, after which violet is used for the first time.

We must now return to the record of her literary work.

In 1861 she made a collection of "Witch Stories" from the British Museum. Messrs. Chapman & Hall were the publishers. Twenty years later they were found worthy of republication by Messrs. Chatto & Windus in their *Mayfair Library*.

For the next three years her only literary output was the scanty supply of magazine articles shown in the table on p. 125.

This was altogether her most barren period. In 1864, *The Lake Country*, in which she and her husband collaborated, was published by Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co. It is not a guide-book in the ordinary sense, but a spirited and exquisitely illustrated description of their joint tour. The *Times* said it was "the best description of that part of England ever published." The *Illustrated London News* waxed eloquent—"Its exterior is noble; its interior, studded with many a glorious illustration, corresponds with the outer splendour." And to this day it is a book such as the collector loves to handle.

In 1865, after the long interval of fourteen years, Mrs. Linton once more made her appearance as a novelist. *Grasp your Nettle*, published in three volumes by Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., was the new venture. £100, with half-profits for a year after if a second edition should be called for, were the terms of the bargain.

The moral of the story—if you have a skeleton in your cupboard, face it and it will lose half its terror—is trite enough, but the book, though heavily padded, is still readable, and this is no mean praise of a novel more than thirty years old. The plot—that part of her novels which Mrs. Linton has often told me she found most troublesome—is in this case more ingenious than usual. At the end of the second volume a note of real tragedy is struck. This is the more noticeable as her tragic scenes are rarely convincing. Of the protagonists, Aura is a flesh-and-blood creation, with something of real splendour and fascination about her, whilst Jasper is nothing more nor less than an adumbration of Rochester.

To those who read between the lines, the mortifications

and vexations of the writer's domestic surroundings at this time are everywhere apparent.

However, it is not my purpose to load this biography with lengthy criticisms of novels to which, with but few exceptions, the general public is not likely to revert. For Mrs. Linton's friends, of course, they will continue to have a personal and private interest.

The following extract from a letter to the wife of Mr. W. J. Fox, late Member of Parliament for Oldham, and well known as one of the most brilliant orators of the Anti-Corn Law campaign (1847), refers to the novel's reception:—

E. L. L. TO MRS. FOX.

"BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, WINDERMERE,
15th July 1865.

". . . I think on the whole that my book has been very well reviewed. I have had one or two sharp blows, but I did not expect that I should be received with open arms by all the critics. It is impossible to please every one, and the only thing that any author has a right to complain of is unfairness in criticism, which includes all personal or class enmity, and abuse because the critic thinks you belong to this or that set. Else, we must take the storm with the sunshine, the bad with the good. I hope that my next will succeed. I will try and do it so well that it must."

Mrs. Linton's reputation for dependableness in work is proved by more than one document which I find amongst her papers of about this date. It was, it will be remembered, a period of pecuniary embarrassment, and the confidence of editors and publishers is shown by several prepayments of from fifty to a hundred pounds, which she was to work off by articles and stories as occasion offered. This confidence she never failed to justify.

The following year (1866) *Lizzie Lorton of Greyrigg*, a novel in three volumes, was published by the Brothers Tinsley. It was written at Brantwood, and the writer's characters are placed amidst the beloved Cumberland surroundings. Ainslie Forbes and Lizzie Lorton are so good

that one is left regretting that they are not just the little better that would make them living creations. There is, however, a very real value in the book for those who would recall the astonishing ecclesiastical neglect and the rude lives of the rustic clergy in these remote parishes during the first half of the century. The descriptive portions are excellent reading, but to insist upon this as the main interest is, of course, as far as the ordinary novel reader is concerned, to condemn the book out of hand.

I shall here insert, as belonging to this period, two letters from George Eliot which I find amongst Mrs. Linton's papers.

"GEORGE ELIOT" TO E. L. L.

"THE PRIORY, NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Saturday, 15th December 1866.

"MY DEAR MRS. LINTON,—It was very good of you to write to me. We had thought it particularly unfortunate for us that just the Sunday when you were able to come we should have happened, contrary to rule, to be away. But I hope we shall still see you before we take our longer flight, for Mr. Lewes has some work which he cannot bear to leave unfinished, and his wretched health hinders him so much that we are not likely to get away till far on in January. You know how prompt and quick a worker he is when he is well, but he is often compelled to sit still through the whole morning.

"I assure you we both feel a strong interest in everything of moment that befalls you, and we hope you will not keep from us either joys or griefs in which you care for sympathy.

"Pray come to us the first Sunday you can.—Always, dear Mrs. Linton, yours most sincerely,

"M. E. LEWES."

"GEORGE ELIOT" TO E. L. L.

"THE PRIORY, NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
27th December 1866.

"MY DEAR MRS. LINTON,—By a sudden decision, founded on Mr. Lewes's growing need of rest, we start for the South to-morrow evening. I send you word of this lest you should kindly come next Sunday and not find us.

"I daresay we shall be at home again early in March, and I hope we shall then have the pleasure of receiving you with less haggard faces than we have to show now.—Always sincerely yours, M. E. LEWES."

Notwithstanding these letters, it is notorious that there was no very cordial feeling between the great writer and her less celebrated contemporary. Mrs. Linton's attitude has been ascribed to professional jealousy, but this may be met by what she herself has put on public record: "I felt her superiority and acknowledged it with enthusiasm. . . . But success and adulation spoilt her and destroyed all simplicity, all sincerity of character. She grew to be artificial, *posée*, pretentious, unreal."

What really touched her to the quick was the difference of treatment meted out by society to "the upholder of the sanctity of marriage, while living as the wife of a married man," and to her own law-abiding self, of whom nothing worse could be suggested than that her marriage had been ill-considered and unsuccessful. But, bitterly and often though she has spoken to me of the injustice which she then suffered, she was ever ready to pay to George Eliot the homage which her intellectual superiority demanded.

As one of her contemporaries—a strenuous opponent of Mrs. Linton on other matters with which we shall presently deal—has written to me—

"She had one of the most generous *minds*—(it is much easier to have a generous *heart*, for pity creeps in and assists)—I ever met. She was generous to all, to her rivals and to all who passed her in the race. I remember well the long talks I used to have with her about George Eliot, whom she knew in the Mary-Anne Evans days, when both were journalists living in a boarding-house in Norfolk Street, Strand. It did not suit Mrs. Lewes to keep up the acquaintance; she dropped Mrs. Linton, and I never failed to admire the generosity, the appreciation with which Mrs. Linton spoke of her."

In the autumn of 1867, Mrs. Linton visited the Gedges, who were then in Guernsey, and there made the acquaintance of Victor Hugo and Paul Naftel.

Of the former she wrote, "I heard his touching and eloquent speech, and looked into his noble face instinct with the immortal life of genius, and felt myself in the presence of a power which it was no flunkeyism to acknowledge, and which it was self-respect to reverence."

With his white hair, black eyebrows, and deep-set eyes, the great Frenchman was a well-known figure on the island, as he walked about with head rather bent, wearing a soft wide-awake and always in a "brown study." One of his chief friends was a little French photographer, to whom it was his amusement to sit in every conceivable attitude. He hated the English, and would not learn a word of their language or allow it to be spoken in his presence.

CHAPTER XII

1866–1868. THE "SATURDAY REVIEW" AND THE WOMAN QUESTION

> Ah, wasteful woman! she who may
> On her sweet self set her own price,
> Knowing he cannot choose but pay,
> How has she cheapened Paradise!
> How given for nought her priceless gift,
> How spoiled the bread and spill'd the wine
> Which, spent with due respective thrift,
> Had made brutes men, and men divine!
>
> COVENTRY PATMORE.

WE are now arrived at an important turning-point in Mrs. Linton's literary career. Hitherto her work had been well received and she had been moderately well paid as things went in those days, but her productions had made no great sensation. She was as yet little more to the public than one of the great nameless band of literary hacks. She was forty-four years of age; she was practically beginning life over again, and there was nothing to lead her to expect that the near future had in store for her a success which was in due course to make her name a household word in every English-speaking country.

In 1855, John Douglas Cook, with whom, as editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, Eliza Lynn had seriously quarrelled, had been appointed editor of the *Saturday Review*. Under his rule it almost immediately took first place amongst the weekly papers of the time, and for many years drew to itself the most brilliant journalism in England. Indeed, to have been a Saturday Reviewer in those roaring days is even now one of the highest of literary credentials.

Cook, as has been said, had a singular instinct for recognis-

ing talent in others and judgment in directing them, though not himself possessed of much literary ability; and although the quarrel between him and Eliza Lynn had been of the bitterest, he was wise enough to sink personal animosities where they clashed with journalistic enterprize, and in 1866 welcomed back his former lieutenant as a free-lance amongst his brilliant little band of fighters.

Writing of her work on the *Saturday*, she says—

"I wrote what struck and made its mark on the things of the time. But my connection with this paper brought me more obloquy than praise. I had something to say, and I said it with what literary force and moral vigour I possessed, indifferent to personal consequences, as I have always been, and as I must ever be now to the end. And those at whom I struck were naturally indignant, and gave me back blow for blow, sometimes hitting below the belt, with even a few odd scratchings thrown in.

"At this time my portion was a strange mixture of literary kudos and personal enmity. I was publicly cut by irate partisans, and no one seemed to think it possible that I had a conscience and was not merely an *advocatus diaboli*, opposing that which I knew to be good and bolstering up that which I knew to be evil. But I lived through it and got good out of it. For I do not think anything enlarges the sympathies or humanises the mind more than undue condemnation. By what we suffer experimentally we can measure the pain of others; and the injustice which we have to accept we are careful not to pass on.

"Besides independent essays, all more or less dealing with one social subject only, I did a great deal of reviewing for the paper. And as I was notoriously beyond fear or favour, I was trusted with the books of my known friends as well as with those of strangers and new writers. My work was always to me impersonal. I said what I honestly thought of the book as an achievement, and no personal sympathy with nor hostility to the writer turned me one hair's breadth to either side. I put my honour in keeping up the high standard of excellence for which the paper in question was then famous. If a book reached that standard, I praised it; if it did not, I

condemned it—and who wrote it did not count. This might have been the work of a stranger, that of a friend—to either circumstance I was indifferent; and the personal favour I have not looked for nor had shown to myself, I never gave to others. I know no other way of dealing with things than on their own merits; and I should care neither to receive for myself, nor to help others to obtain, that ephemeral reputation which is due to private patronage and not to the worth of the work done.

"I remember one Sunday dining at the house of a clever woman who disbelieved in the general honesty of the press. I had just reviewed a book which she had not read; but she knew the young authoress personally, and believed that she could not have written anything worthy of these encomiums —that no good could come out of this little corner of Nazareth. During dinner the conversation turned on the corruption and venality of the press, and she instanced this notice, which had appeared in the —— the day before, as an example.

"'That review must either have been paid for, or it was done by a personal friend,' she said. 'In neither case was it an honest criticism.'

"'Neither one nor the other,' I answered. 'I know who wrote it, and I give you my word of honour that the reviewer had never heard the name of the authoress before he received her book, nor was the faintest indication given him of the tone to be taken. It was reviewed on its own merits only.'

"For my own part, I can only say that I know nothing of the venality of the press so often spoken of. One hears of £10 paid for this favourable notice, and £10 paid for that. . . . So far as I know, those come worst off who attempt to influence to their own favour the authorities in chief or the workers in detail of any paper that respects itself."

Her initial contribution to the paper was a review of *Hester's Sacrifice*, which appeared on 21st April 1866. The total number of *Saturday* articles for this year was twenty-one. In 1867 she only wrote ten, but the year 1868 found her represented in thirty-three out of the fifty-two numbers. It was this year that she made her great hit with "The Girl

of the Period," which was given a place of honour in the issue of the 14th March.

Of course Mrs. Linton had long ere this identified herself with the Woman Question. But so far she had been rightly regarded by the limited circle in which she moved as one of the advanced guard. Now, however, she was "finding salvation" and becoming distinctly reactionary.

Hitherto she had concerned herself more with the rights than the duties of women, and had claimed for them the prerogative of taking a hand in all those occupations which had up till then been exclusively assigned to men. Now she was beginning to realise that a natural limitation of sphere is included in the fact of sex; that the extreme section of the supporters of woman's rights were making short work of woman's inherent modesty, of her domestic duties, and of maternity. The last they had the hardihood to look upon as a curse and degradation—"making a woman no better than a cow," as one of these ladies, herself a mother, once indignantly said to Mrs. Linton. When these points came to the front she parted company with the cause, but still her creed was sufficiently comprehensive. She summed it up in these three clauses—

"That women should have an education as good in its own way as, but not identical with, that of men; that they ought to hold their own property free from their husbands' control without the need of trustees, but subject to the joint expenditure for the family; that motherhood should be made legally equal with paternity, so that no such miserable scandal of broken promises and religious rancour as this later Agar-Ellis case should be possible."

And she lived to see all these things practically accomplished.

Of course she was regarded as a turncoat by some, and by others was charged with wishing to impose restrictions where she had insisted upon freedom for herself. But I think in the one case she will be found to have had good reason for her courageous change of front, and in the other to have realised that emancipation had not proved such a success in her case as to warrant its general adoption.

This is what she wrote in an evening paper replying to certain unchivalrous strictures passed upon her in its columns—

"I belong to the generation when women of a certain class were absolutely secure from insult, because the education of our brothers, as of our fathers, included that kind of chivalrous respect for the weaker sex which was then regarded as inseparable from true gentlehood and real civilisation. And old traditions and associations cling close. I belong, too, to the generation which made the first steps for the emancipation of women; and I was one of the most ardent and enthusiastic of the advanced guard. I thought that the lives of women should be as free as those of men, and that community of pursuits would bring about a fine fraternal condition of things, where all men would be like big brothers and no woman need fear. I have lived to see my mistake. Knowing in my own person all that women have to suffer when they fling themselves into the active fray, I would prevent with all my strength young girls from following my mistake, and guard them with my own body from such insults as you and your kind have showered on me when differing from you in opinion.

"The whole thing seems to me more and more to be a gigantic mistake. The women advocates themselves and their male backers—the disregard of all old-world modesties here and the unmanly brutality there; the feverish love of notoriety and excitement in both sexes alike—ought to open the eyes of all sane people to the true character of a movement which makes women hard and men hysterical, which gives to each sex the vices of the other while destroying its own hitherto distinctive virtues."

That seems to put the matter in a nutshell, and it is written with the fierce indignation proper to the occasion.

Nor was the change of sides made easier by likelihood of success. She had a shrewd suspicion that the Atlantic would beat her in the end, but Mrs. Partington's spirit was upon her, and she donned her pattens, trundled her mop, squeezed out the sea-water, and vigorously set to work to push back the ocean to the best of her ability.

Undoubtedly it appears something of a paradox that the woman who had stormed and occupied one of man's strongholds, fighting him with his own weapons and in the face of enormous odds, should discount her victory by declaring before all the world that this was not the work proper to women. But an uncommon honesty forced her to confess that she had not chosen the better part. She did not for a moment deny to women the right to work, but she did preach, and that with passionate conviction and emphasis, that the price paid was often too heavy, and that the so-called emancipation and licence, which much of man's work connoted, were but poor substitutes for the duties and happiness of wifehood and motherhood. Nor did she ever forget that she had herself been a "revolting daughter" before the fact, and this made her sympathetic and tender towards her younger "revolting" sisters, regarded as individuals.

"We all take this moral sickness in our ardent youth," she said, "just as we take the measles or the whooping-cough. Experience and time bring counteracting influences, and the fever of revolt cools down into the calmer mood of acquiescence. It is a good thing when serene old age gives us juster and wider views than are to be found in mere revolt." And as she said this, there were the tears in her voice which told how little she valued her fame in comparison with the ecstasy of maternity, for which she had yearned and which had been denied her.

Of course her recantation was the signal for unmeasured abuse. Indeed, one of the leaders of the party for the Emancipation of Women has thought fit, in writing to me since her death, to repeat on the convenient evidence of one who is dead and therefore not to be challenged, what I do not hesitate to characterise as, on the face of it, the basest of libels. He told her, forsooth, that Mrs. Linton told him that she "found it paid better to attack women than to defend them"!

What a sweetener for Fielding's "cup of tea"! Was ever a slander which bore its own refutation more clearly on its face? But apparently any weapon is good enough to beat a valiant and redoubtable opponent with, when there is

only the dead body to belabour. Fortunately there were others who recognised the true nobility that may underlie what the world calls "apostasy."

One of these wrote to her—

"Thank God for honest people. I have devoured every word . . . with emotion and gratitude that some one still exists who can generously and unreservedly say, 'I was wrong.' How few can bring themselves to do so. Their egotism is stronger than their love of truth, even when they can see their folly. The other sex can *never* again say that women are too much blinded by passion to recant, and do it as nobly as you have done."

And after her death Sir Walter Besant penned this noble tribute—

> She fought for Woman; yet with women fought,
> The sexless tribe, the "Shrieking Sisterhood";
> Who made them masks of men, and fondly thought
> Like men to do; to stand where men have stood.
>
> She fought for Woman, and for all the gifts
> Which consecrate her priestess of mankind;
> Eternal priestess—she who leads and lifts
> The man, who, but for her, crept dark and blind.

No doubt in the crusade she often allowed eagerness to overrun discretion, and stated the pros and cons with exaggeration; but in the revolutionary stage of any movement the leaders are of necessity partisans and bigots. Later on the happy mean is struck and the matter compromised, but when Mrs. Linton buckled on her armour it was war to the knife.

It had for some time been evident to readers of the *Saturday Review* (and at that time all the world was reading it), that the new woman was not going to have it all her own way. A very trenchant pen had been found asking the question, "What is woman's work?" and pointing out, in course of answering it, that there was a growing class of the emancipated, to whom the little royalty of home is the last place where a woman cares to shine, and the most uninteresting of all the domains she seeks to govern. "Fancy a high-souled creature, capable of æsthetics, giving her mind to soup

THE AUTHORESS OF THE "GIRL OF THE PERIOD"

AS IMAGINED BY MATT. MORGAN

or the right proportion of chutnee for the curry! Fancy, too, a brilliant creature foregoing an evening's conversational glory abroad for the sake of a prosaic husband's more prosaic dinner!"

This and its like was bad enough, but when the "Modern Mother"[1] was shown to be no better than she should be, and the "Girl of the Period" was squarely told that she envied the queens of the *demi-monde* for their gorgeous attire and sumptuous appointments more than she abhorred them; that she did not marry for love, but looked for a banker rather than a husband; that men were finding out that she was only a poor copy of a far more amusing reality, and that they would amuse themselves with her for an evening, but would not readily take her for life; then all the world was set buzzing in earnest.

Forthwith the "Girl of the Period" figured in caricatures, comedies, and farces. The catchword was as rife then as our "absent-minded beggar" now. A "Girl of the Period" journal was started, in which various girls of various periods figured in all kinds of fantastic attitudes and costumes. "The publication," Mr. Ashby-Sterry writes to me, "first began with the *G. P. Almanack*, which sold wonderfully. Then came the *Miscellany* every month for a year—then another Almanack. After that came the *Period*, which I think was not very successful and did not last very long. The *G. P. Miscellany* was edited by James Vizetelly—who I fancy was also proprietor. Among the contributors, beside myself, were Mortimer Collins, Augustus Mayhew, Savile Clarke, and Edward Draper. It was illustrated by Miss Claxton, E. Barnes, William Brunton, and, I think, Frank Vizetelly. It was one of those ephemeral publications that are thrown away as soon as read, and I daresay I am the only person who has a complete set of it."

Every one wanted to know who was the inventor of the expression, and since the true author could not be found, several obliging persons consented to replace him or her.

Punch delivered himself of the following somewhat ponderous joke, evidently coined to meet the demand:—

[1] *Saturday Review*, 29th February 1868.

"IMMEDIATE.

"If the 'Girl of the Period' is as she is represented, the sooner a *stop* is put to her the better."

Most of those who were not behind the scenes supposed that the writer of the article was a man,[1] and "one enthusiast" (I quote this from a newspaper cutting which I cannot identify) "suggested that a patriotic defender of the reputation of English womanhood should go to the offices of the *Saturday Review*, demand the name of the writer, and thereupon inflict upon him a good argument in the shape of a sound thrashing."

In fact, the article produced one of those fine outbursts of virtuous indignation of which we, as a people, are so unreasonably proud.

This is the account of the matter given by Mrs. Linton herself, when, on the republication of the articles in book form by the Bentleys sixteen years later, she formally acknowledged their authorship[2]—

"The essays hit sharply enough at the time, and caused some ill-blood. 'The Girl of the Period' was especially obnoxious to many to whom women were the sacred sex, above criticism and beyond rebuke; and I had to pay pretty smartly in private life, by those who knew, for what they termed a libel and an untruth. With these passionate repudiators on the one hand, on the other were some who, trading on the enforced anonymity of the paper, took

[1] Mr. Thomas Hardy was amongst those who never suspected the sex of the writer. He was much impressed by the articles, and will point out to this day the exact spot—a green slope in a pasture—where he first read them. Amongst Mrs. Linton's papers, too, I find a letter from Mr. Henry Vizetelly, addressed to the writer of "The Girl of the Period," asking whether *he* would be willing to enter into an arrangement for the republication of any articles relating to the female sex, etc. etc. *Judy* also, who was at that time carrying on a polemic with the *Saturday*, wrote—

"CONCLUSIVE.

"Since the 'Girl of the Period,' as depicted by the writer in the *Saturday Pooh-pooh*, is an entirely imaginary creation on the part of that writer, it follows as a matter of course that *he himself* must be a miss-creant."

[2] A selection was also published by Baron Tauchnitz.

spurious credit to themselves for the authorship. I was twice introduced to the writer of 'The Girl of the Period.' The first time he was a clergyman who had boldly told my friends that he had written the paper; the second, she was a lady of rank well known in London society, and to this hour believed by her own circle to have written this and other of the articles included in the present collection. I confess that, whether for praise or blame, I am glad to be able at last to assume the full responsibility of my own work."

On the second occasion alluded to, Mrs. Linton, as a matter of fact, was momentarily stung into disclosing her secret. It happened at an evening reception, that she and the great lady were sitting side by side, when the conversation turned on "The Girl of the Period." One of the men said, "Oh, we have to thank Lady —— for that very able article."

Lady —— smiled acquiescence.

This was too much for the "real Simon Pure," and she blurted out—

"Lady —— may have written the article, but I certainly received the cheque."

It is characteristic of Mrs. Linton that the lapse of years found her still unrepentant. "In re-reading these papers," she says, "I am more than ever convinced that I have struck the right chord of condemnation, and advocated the best virtues and most valuable characteristics of women. I neither soften nor retract a line of what I have said. One of the modern phases of womanhood—hard, unloving, mercenary, ambitious, without domestic faculty and devoid of healthy natural instincts—is still to me a pitiable mistake and a grave national disaster. And I think now, as I thought when I wrote these papers, that a public and professional life for women is incompatible with the discharge of their highest duties or the cultivation of their noblest qualities. I think now, as I thought then, that the sphere of human action is determined by the fact of sex, and that there does exist both natural limitation and natural direction. This creed, which summarises all that I have said *in extenso*, I repeat with emphasis, and maintain with the conviction of long years of experience."

That she had to pay pretty smartly for her temerity, may be gathered from the following episode.

She had one day, soon after the publication of the notorious article, taken a friend, Miss Bird, to a meeting of some sort at St. James's Hall. In the entry they met a still living and celebrated authoress, who was then, as now, prominent in the cause of the advancing woman. Mrs. Linton held out her hand to greet her.

"I refuse," said the lady, "to take your hand unless you first assure me you did not write that odious article, 'The Girl of the Period.'"

This, from a journalist who must have been well aware of the rights which attach to anonymous journalism, not unnaturally ruffled Mrs. Linton, and drawing herself up, she answered—

"As an authoress yourself, you must be well aware that you are asking an unpardonable question," and passed on.

But this was not enough, for the lady thought fit to follow up the encounter by a letter declining further acquaintance with Mrs. Linton unless she disavowed the articles. She again naturally refused to be drawn, and the acquaintanceship ceased.

Here is a sample of the many letters of remonstrance which, from this time forward, were showered upon her by anonymous correspondents. It refers to a signed article on the Woman Question, and runs to seven pages. A short extract will suffice.

"Surely you must feel sometimes for your own sex! Why are you such an advocate for the other side—which requires no advocate? Why, oh *why* help the strong? I do not want to be unkind, but it would serve you right if you lost your gifts and ceased to be able to write! Even then, I fear, your written works would live! I don't know what is to be done with you. I think you must be hypnotised! Now, touching Mrs. Jackson of Clitheroe. Why were you in such a rage that a wife should not be compelled by law to live with her husband, when you knew a husband could not be made to live with his wife? Naughty

Mrs. Linton! What a temper you were in, to be sure. Unfortunately it doesn't prevent you writing well.

"Good-bye, Mrs. L. L. I wish I could burn all your writings and take away the pens from you."

Signed, "A champion of women, whether wild or tame."

On the other hand, it must be remembered that those with calmer judgment, who looked back upon the war which she waged unceasingly over so long a period, were compelled to an unwilling admiration.

The generous tribute of one of those who could not see eye to eye with her may here be quoted:—

"Many even of her friends regarded her as a sort of feminine Quixote, a little too ready to set her lance in rest and ride, with waving plumes and shouts of defiance, at some mouldering old windmill, or ragged scarecrow. But one could not fail to respect the manful courage and directness with which she assailed the things that seemed to her despicable and wrong. We may think that she said too much, and objurgated too loudly, upon those partly mythical figures, the Girl of the Period and the New Woman. But it is surely incorrect to assert that the unwomanly woman formed the sole object of her satire and invective. On the contrary, she liked and admired manliness in the one sex as much as womanliness in the other; and the unmanly man, with his vices and his weaknesses, roused her indignation as much as the woman who forgot that she was feminine. To the true 'emancipation of woman,' she was, by her own career and action, a living witness. She had vindicated the right of her sex to independence, to a profession, to participation in intellectual pursuits and opportunities, to a character and soul of her own. What she always disliked was the kind of emancipation which turned woman into a bad imitation of man, and made man a rather offensive copy of a certain kind of woman. 'I come of a race of strong men,' she once said to the present writer; and the milk-and-water male was no more to her taste than the brandy-and-water female. Hasty she may have been, indiscreet, unduly violent, wielding her broadsword with more energy than precision; but she fought

her fight through life generously, and with the stimulus of high ideals and sincere beliefs."

Probably few besides her biographer can judge how just an estimate this is. Wading through her correspondence, almost knee-deep, he has learnt that it was not in public only that she harnessed herself as the champion of womanhood, of domesticity, of modesty, of goodness, of personal character. In season and out of season she insisted, sometimes it is true almost despairingly, but always doggedly, that the oncoming tide of the Wild Women and Shrieking Sisterhood must be swept back. And who can tell how many acres of womanliness she has preserved for us, just as the Dutch "polders" have fought for and won their low-lying areas year by year and bit by bit? By the tourist but little of this "impoldering" and pumping, this raising of dykes and dams, is realised. He only sees results. He knows nothing of the struggle. Just so it is hard for those who have not been privileged to peep behind the scenes to realise the indomitable spirit, the passionate enthusiasm, and the invincible determination with which to the last Mrs. Linton continued to face the odds which she never allowed to overwhelm her.

It must not be deduced from all this that she denied to women the right of being strong and brave as well as sweet and modest. Asked whether she advised us to give our small daughter swimming lessons, she wrote—

"I have always said all women should learn (1) to swim, (2) to load and fire a pistol or gun, (3) to climb up a ladder without losing her head, (4) to ride—and they need not be new women any the more for all these accomplishments!"

And she was as opposed to petticoat government for boys as she was to the bloomerising of girls.

I cannot, I think, do better than conclude this chapter with two examples of her letters, one private and pronouncing generally on the woman question, the other written to the public press indignantly protesting against what most of us feel was an improper and unbecoming public exhibition.

Extract from a private letter—

". . . Tell Mrs. —— from me, that being the sweet and dainty and delectable lady you describe her, she has no reason

whatever to fall foul of me. I am the Celebrant of such women. Only of the revolted women; only of the bad copies of men who have thrown off all womanly charm and have not been able to adopt virile virtues; only of the fast, the immodest, the egotistical, the self-assertive, the unwomanly, am I the bitter and uncompromising enemy. No one in the world honours and loves true women more than I, but then they must be women, with the faults of women even thrown in, certainly better than the adopted faults of men! . . . I know how tremendously I am misunderstood and misrepresented. The press gave the keynote, and all people who do not know me repeat like echoes. I am *not* an enemy to women—quite the reverse; but I do not like unwomanly, undutiful, or selfish women."

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'DAILY GRAPHIC.'

"SIR,—The illustration you gave on 2nd March of the lady footballers at play, is one to make all but the most advanced of the sexless men and unsexed women who head this disastrous movement pause in dismay at the lengths to which it has gone. Has, indeed, all sense of fitness, of feminine delicacy—not to speak of decency—left these misguided girls and women, whose sole endeavour seems to be to make themselves bad copies of men, while throwing off every attribute that constitutes the charm of women? Say that modesty is conditional to the age and country; still, the sentiment is intrinsic if the manifestations vary. The woman who violates the canons of modesty of her own times is as reprehensible as if those canons were as essential as the elementary crimes and obligations of organised society. The Spartan girls ran their races naked and were not ashamed. What was accepted then as blameless would be a police offence now. We go about with unveiled faces and are not disgraced, but the lady of the harem who should discard her veil would be a good-for-nought in heart and rightly repudiated by her sisters. These boy-girls—these worse than hoydenish football players—sin against the laws of modesty in force at the present day, and we look in perplexed disgust at the exhibition they make of themselves. We wonder if any of them have fathers or mothers or brothers, or if they are waifs and strays gathered from the four corners of the earth, with no social standing to

lose and no inborn perception of the difference between a degrading notoriety and honourable fame. We know where and by whom they will be applauded and encouraged, and how those who discountenance this immodest display will be vilified. But the repute of English girls is too sacred to be carelessly regarded, and every man and woman who respects that repute should join in a powerful protest against the two classes of girl seducers now rampant in our midst—those who seek to pollute their minds by premature initiation, and those who seek to destroy their delicacy by personal unseemliness and practical indecency.—Yours faithfully,

"E. LYNN LINTON."

CHAPTER XIII

1868–1871

FROM Russell Place Mrs. Linton moved to Fitzroy Street, and later to 28 Gower Street, where she remained from 1869 to 1871.

In addition to her journalistic work on the *Saturday Review* and elsewhere, she had found time to write another three-volumed novel, *Sowing the Wind*, which she dedicated to her "Beloved brother and lifelong friend, Arthur T. Lynn."

She was now again moving in the literary society of London, which she loved.

Amongst others with whom she came in contact about this time, and who were destined to become famous, were those pioneers of the lady doctor, Miss Garrett, the Misses Blackwell, and Dr. Mary Walker, to whom *Punch* put the unkind question—

"Why ought a medical quack to be a woman?" and cruelly answered it—

"Because he's always a Charlotte Anne."

Of the last of these four young women, who, in her words, "had clanked into the dissecting-room," she wrote—

"I may as well say here that the bloomer costume which she wore, with that huge rose in her hair as her sign of sex, did much to retard the Woman Question all round. The world is frivolous, no doubt, but here, as in France, ridicule kills, and you can force convictions sooner than tastes. When that handsome barmaid in Tottenham Court Road put on trousers as a greater attraction to gin-drinkers, not only Bloomerism received its death-blow, but the cause got a 'shog 'maist ruined a'.' It survived, however, and now flourishes like a green bay tree."

In these years, too, Mrs. Linton became acquainted with many of the leading scientific men of the day, and began to frequent the meetings of learned societies. Amongst the former the celebrated Orientalist, John Crawfurd, held a foremost place in her affection and respect. Of him she wrote—

"No truer soul ever lived than he; no kinder, juster, nor more faithful friend and father. His tall and powerfully built figure, just touched by the hand of time, and slightly, very slightly bent—his handsome face, with the eyes still bright, vivacious, penetrating, where the lightning-lines of latent passion flashed across the sweeter and more placid tracts—his noble white-haired head, and that look of a man who has won all along the line, and who enjoys and does not regret—all made him one of the most striking features of the learned societies where no one was commonplace."

Another was William Spottiswoode, the physicist and author of *The Polarisation of Light*, who devoted "fortune and place, beauty of person and refinement of mind, an intelligence that somehow reminded one of polished steel, and a character as free from base alloy as gold that has been tried in the fire . . . to the furtherance of pure science and to the good of his fellow-men."

Then there was James Spedding, one of the Speddings of Mirehouse, old neighbours and friends of the Lynns, of whom Tennyson said, "He was the Pope among us young men, the wisest man I know," and of whom Mrs Linton wrote—

He "was one who touched the crown of the ideal student, whose justice of judgment was on a par with his sweetness of nature, whose intellectual force was matched by his serenity, his patience, his self-mastery, his purity. In the midst of the violent clashings caused by the arbitrary and contradictory dogmatisms which afflict and bewilder us, his quiet breadth, his godlike serenity and all-embracing liberalism, were as refreshing as silence after uproar, as shade in the noonday heat. The way in which he died was the crowning act of a life that had never known bitterness, revenge, nor any strain whatever of the darker passions; and

were the world of thought to have its saints, James Spedding would be one of the first canonised."

He was run down by a cab on 1st March 1881, and died on the 9th. While still conscious, he was characteristically anxious to make it clear that he considered the accident to have been due not to the driver but to his own carelessness.

Another old and valued friend was Edward Flower, the father of Sir W. H. Flower of the Natural History Museum, "whose humanity went over to horses after the issue of slavery was closed by emancipation."

"In the early days of the American Civil War, before the introduction of emancipation by the North—the playing of the black knave as the trump card,"—Mrs. Linton was on the side of the South. She took their part because of the right of insurrection, which she had always upheld. One evening she had the temerity to say this to Edward Flower, whose opinions were well known to be so very different, as they stood on his hearthrug before dinner was announced.

"He very nearly ordered me out of the house," she writes, "instead of giving me the place at his table destined for me. I think he would have done so, had not Moncure Conway come to the rescue. He defended me, from my own point of view. He condemned that point of view in itself, and showed where it was part crooked and part shortsighted, but, granted my premises as honestly held, he could not see that I was to be condemned. Thus he calmed down the towering wrath of our Jupiter Mæcenas, and things went on velvet from the soup to the grapes."

Other leading scientific men with whom she was on terms of intimacy, and for whom she had, in common with all who knew them, the profoundest admiration, were W. K. Clifford and Balfour, both of whom had proved their outstanding qualities, but who "went down to the grave before they had more than begun their assigned tasks; and their slips of the great Yggdrasil, by which heaven and earth are bound together, withered in the darkness of their untimely death."

Further friendships which date from these earlier years of her second literary period were those with Mr. (now Sir

George) Lewis and his wife, Mrs. Ben Susan, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Joshua, Dr. Asher, Ford Madox Brown, Henry Morley, Edmund Yates, and William Hepworth Dixon.

As will be evident from several of these names, she was at this time brought much in contact with some of the leading London Jews, and, with her insatiable thirst for knowledge and her passionate desire to discover truth for herself, she characteristically made the most of the opportunities thus offered for studying one of the most fascinating of problems. The net result of her investigations of the Jewish and other religions was a profound conviction that all are of human origin, and that the chief good and supreme end of conduct are to be found not in any creed, but in pure devotion to the interests of others. In other words, altruism—the love of humanity—seemed to her to be worth all the religions in the world.

How far her final judgment was the result of prejudice, how far she was illogical in her reasoning, this is not the place to discuss. All that we are concerned with are the facts of her life and mental development, and no one who knew her will doubt that her convictions, however erroneous, were honestly arrived at.

I shall shortly give the main lines of her argument.

In the first place, she denied to herself the right of being convinced of any matter whatsoever unless based on what commended itself as proof positive. In such matters as, by lack of education or lack of opportunity, she was unable to investigate for herself, she of course bowed to authority, adopting as working hypotheses the conclusions arrived at by those in whom she felt the highest confidence.

But religion was on a different footing altogether. In its very nature it was the one matter which every thinking person was bound to investigate at first hand.

"By the law under which I live and suffer," she wrote, "I have to work out my difficulties for myself; and no personal admiration for the moral results in an individual can carry me over to the faith from which these results have sprung. I am like one standing in a barren centre whence radiate countless pathways—each professing to lead to the Unseen Home."

Then she had to face the difficulty that in every religion alike there is the belief that in it, and it alone, there is direct Divine illumination and consequently an assumption of God's special favour to those who hold it.

And "the correlative of this special favouritism and enlightenment is darkness, estrangement, and eternal exile for those who are not included." This revolted her by its obvious partiality and consequent injustice, though in this matter she admitted that "our own laxer and more liberal Protestantism" was less blameworthy than any other religion.

With "this self-complacent trust in God's special favour" she then contrasted "the generous humanity of those who think that their own best happiness is to be found in the happiness of others." And she instanced "our poor discredited prophets, the Communists, with their altruistic dreams of a universal Utopia, where there shall be no lack and no injustice."

"For them," she continues, "is no exclusiveness of favour—no heights where the beloved stand joyously in the sunshine—no hollows where the disgraced cry out to the empty night in vain—no heaven for the lambs—no hell for the goats—no broad lands and goodly heritage for the firstborn, with banishment and dispossession for the rest; but a sweet and fruitful Elysium for all alike. Poor dreamers, and yet how human! and how far more generous than the Covenanted!

"The parable of Lazarus and Dives synthesises the whole matter. 'Leaning on Abraham's bosom—safe in the arms of the Saviour—I and my beloved are happy, no matter who else is in torment. I have made my own calling and election sure; and for the rest, it is not my affair whom God in His infinite mercy and justice may think fit to torture for all eternity. The great gulf fixed between us cannot be passed, and Dives must call out for water in vain.'"

It was the Jewish Litany of Thanksgiving, "which praises God that He has made them better and more blessed than the other sons of man—Jews and not Gentiles—freemen and

not slaves—*men and not women*," together with "our own Te Deums for victories gained perhaps in unjust and cruel wars," which gave her the final shock "and conviction of selfishness that was as painful as physical anguish."

And then to crown it all, there is the "volume of supplication which goes up day by day and hour by hour from man to that dread Deity behind the clouds who Can and Does not!"

"These thoughts," she says, "haunted and overpowered me. The sins and sorrows of humanity seemed to grow larger as I contrasted them with the Power which could redeem and would not. Those sins, those sorrows, claimed the Divine as their author by reason of their very existence. 'I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I, the Lord,' do all these things.' And the mystery of spiritual darkness seeking light and not finding it grew till it swallowed up all the rest. I cried aloud for illumination. I prayed with the anguish which no one need blush to feel nor be ashamed to confess, for the Divine light which should make these dark things clear. No answer came. No voice spoke to my soul, penetrating the thick cloud and showing the living way of truth. None! None! But one night as I prayed, I prayed into the invisible dark, the felt void; and my words came back like a hot blast into my face as I realised that I petitioned an immutable and impersonal Law which neither heard nor heeded—which wrought no conscious evil and gave no designed favour."

Whatever we may think of her line of reasoning—and of course there are at every step answers more or less pertinent that will suggest themselves—no one can, I think, question its passionate honesty, its genuine pathos. "What does it, what does it all mean?" she one day cried to me in unmistakable agony, as our conversation brought us for the moment face to face with the impenetrable barrier.

And she wrote, "Who that has known the hour when the Father is not, and Law has taken the place of Love, can ever forget it? The whole aspect of life is changed, and a cry goes out from the soul as when the beloved has died—a cry to which is no answer and for which is no comfort—

only the echo flung back by the walls of the grave. The blank despair; the sense of absolute loneliness; of drifting on a pathless sea without a fixed point to make for or a sign by which to steer; of floating unrooted in space; the consciousness of universal delusion and phantasmagoric self-creation that it has all been—no man who has gone through that moment of supreme anguish need fear the Schoolman's hell. He has been down into one worse than the worst, which terrified timid souls in those Ages of Faith which were essentially the Days of Darkness. . . .

"And yet if this darkness, this limitation, this impenetrable barrier, be really the truth, and all attempts at more positive construction be delusions, the pain of the discovery, in the desolation it brings with it, is better for the strong man than the false comfort of a cheating hope. Before all else let us leave things as they are. If we are in the midst of an untilled waste, let us recognise its barrenness and its potentialities; and neither believe that it is a garden for this part, nor unimprovable for that. In [this] case we have at least an incentive to cultivate and amend our holding, and to go on until we come to something better.

". . . We realise with ever clearer understanding the obligation of living for the future, not only for the present; for the general well-being, not only for our individual good."

These and a hundred other like considerations drove her to the conclusion that "altruism, far from general acceptance as it is, is at once our highest duty and our noblest consolation."

"To the individual," she continues, "life is too often like a huge cynical joke, where he is led by false hopes, mocked by illusive pleasures, pursued by phantom fears, and where he loses the joy of his desire so soon as he gains possession. . . . And from this suffering, this mockery, this delusion of the senses and painful striving of thought and aspiration, the only mode of escape is forgetfulness of self in the good of the race."

From this it is clear that what she advocated was pure altruism, not the "benevolence to others in subordination to self-interest" of Comte.

Nor did she shrink from the obvious questions: Why should we be virtuous when we get nothing by it? Why should we forego the present, which is our own, for a future by which we shall not profit and where we shall not be found?

And she answered them boldly and unflinchingly—

"Because of the law of moral evolution, which is just as irresistible as that of the physical—which indeed is the result of the physical. . . . It is the Law of Progress—the law under which all creation lives until it changes into that dispersion of forces we call death and disintegration, to be followed by a nobler reconstruction. We have no explanation to give. Agnosticism has no pillar of cloud by day nor flame of fire to lead by night, marking the way and illumining each step as we go. It has only the guidance of experience and scientific truth as its waylines. But the Wherefore and the Whither are as obscure as the Whence and the How —as the future destinies of the race or the undetected relations of the spheres."

Notwithstanding her confessed agnosticism, which I hope none will be found illogical enough to confound with dogmatic atheism, she never denied that the religious sentiment embodied in a creed and an actual God has immense private influence. "It gives a man a force beyond himself," she confessed, "and helps him to bear misfortune because it leaves him always hope." Indeed, she went further than this, and insisted that, for the average person in the present stage of moral evolution, religion is the best and most necessary of all safeguards. For those, however, who possess the requisite mental endowment for the seeking of first principles or fundamental truths, she denied the necessity of such a support, and would instance the many well-known examples of patience and self-control carried to the last point of perfection by philosophers who have had recourse to no strength but their own. In other words, religion was to her but the go-cart of the infant race, to be cast aside so soon as it could walk alone, and already dispensed with by a few of the strongest.

Without the above explanation of her position, it would

be hard to reconcile with strict honesty the terms of the following letter, written at this time to a niece. With that explanation, the matter seems to present little difficulty.

E. L. L. TO MISS ADA GEDGE.

"28 GOWER STREET, W.C.,
14th July 1870.

"As for you, my sweet darling, I do not think you have gone very far wrong. The great thing for you to cultivate, Ada, is a *habit* of industry, a habit of concentration and purpose. It is of no use only wishing to do things well—one must *try;* and it is of no use trying for a time—we must persevere. If you will resolutely cultivate that, and pray very earnestly for help in your well-doing, you will find things grow easy that are now difficult, and help will come to you to overcome any bad habit you may have fallen into. I know nothing worse of you than this, and if I scolded you ever so hard I should scold you for nothing else; but here does lie your difficulty; and this want of perseverance, want of concentration, want of *steady* industry, and the inclination to do things by fits and starts and not regularly, are the 'little foxes' you must catch and turn out of the 'standing corn' of your soul.

"You are a dear, sweet child, and I for one love you tenderly and warmly, and I can so thoroughly sympathise with you in all your mental difficulties, for I remember so well when I was your age wanting so passionately to be good and noble and right, and finding the path so hard, not to follow, but to find. It is so hard sometimes to know what *is* right and what is wrong. It is only by the grace of God that our sins are revealed to us. If we keep our consciences tender we know when we are wrong, and then we find at last how to set ourselves right; but all this doubt and sorrow and desire to do well and difficulty in doing it belongs to the young, and is part of the education which God gives them, part of the process by which the chaff is separated from the grain, according to the earnestness with which one tries, and the success with which one searches.

"I have no more to say, my Ada darling, and I have no kind of doubt that you will find how to put yourself right if you feel that you have got astray. God bless you, and God

help you, sweet child! and what poor help or sympathy I can give you, let me, for I have gone through all this before —as does every earnest soul at all ages. . . . Your own friend and lovingest AUNTY LIZA."

The year 1869 was marked by an interesting episode arising out of the publication of Forster's *Life of Landor*.

In it, as has been said, the author had thought fit practically to ignore the intimate friendship which had existed between Mrs. Linton and the old Roman. To quote her own words, he had used the *Life* as "a vehicle for his own self-laudation—dwarfing all other friendships to aggrandise and augment his own." He had, in her opinion, shown a despicable "want of loyalty to the man, dead, whose feet he had kissed while living."

Landor had been his friend and benefactor—had given him the copyright of his works, and had trusted him with that most sacred deposit, the story of his life. Forster repaid his munificence by emphasising the weaknesses and faintly depicting the grand qualities of his friend, from whom no more was to be expected, and whose last act of generosity had been performed.

And, as luck would have it, it was to her that Dickens, all ignorant of her bitter indignation, sent the volumes to be reviewed for *All the Year Round!*

The article which she wrote at white heat began with the unmistakable challenge: "*The Life of Walter Savage Landor has yet to be written.*"

We may imagine the dismay with which Dickens, who was on closest terms of intimacy with Forster, and indeed already regarded him as his own Boswell, read the ominous words.

The article was returned, accompanied by the following letter—

CHARLES DICKENS TO E. L. L.

"26 WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,
Saturday, 19th June 1869.

"MY DEAR MRS. LINTON,—Although your article on our old friend is interesting as a piece of personal remembrance,

it does not satisfy my desires as a review of Forster's book. It could hardly be otherwise than painful to Forster that I, one of his oldest literary friends, and certainly of all others his most intimate and confidential, should insert in these pages an account of Landor—or touch the subject—without a word of commendation of a biography that has cost, to my knowledge, a world of care and trouble. I find from your letter to my son that you do not think well of the said book. Admitting that the life was to be written at all, I *do*. And it is because I think well of it, and wish highly to commend it on what I deem to be its deserts, that I am staggered and stopped short by your paper, and fear that I must turn to and write another in its stead.

"I want you to understand the case on my own presentation of it, and hence I trouble you with this note.—Believe me always, very faithfully yours,

"CHARLES DICKENS."

Mrs. Linton's reply to this is not forthcoming, but Dickens's further letter demonstrates the loyalty with which he held himself to the bargain which had been struck with her at the initiation of his magazine.

CHARLES DICKENS TO E. L. L.

"26 WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,
Monday, 21st June 1869.

"MY DEAR MRS. LINTON,—I had not the least intention of returning you the enclosed paper, and had ordered it—in right of our long association—to be placed to your credit in the business account. That order I shall certainly not cancel (except under compulsion), but you are perfectly free to publish the paper, nevertheless.—Believe me, very faithfully yours, CHARLES DICKENS."

Where the paper was finally published I have not discovered. Certainly the anonymous article in the July number of the *North British Review*, which Dr. Garnett rightly conjectures to have been from her pen, is not that which Dickens rejected. There was another article in *Broadway* written

by her, and published on 1st August, but this I have not seen. A year later (July 1870) Fraser had a long article from her, entitled "Reminiscences of Walter Savage Landor," which reads as if it might have been a modification of the rejected article.

At any rate, it is certain that a "slating" article *did* appear, for two days after its publication the following episode occurred at a dinner given by Shirley Brooks.:—

"Have you seen Mrs. Linton's review of *Landor's Life* by Forster?" asked their host of Lord Houghton, who was one of the guests. "It is the neatest thing I know. She has taken the skin off him so—so," he added, making a movement as if tearing strips along his arm.

So much for the polemics of the time.

The following letter, which I have permission to publish, shows that Mrs. Linton was also taking part in its active benevolences.

The visit to Clapton here arranged for was immediately followed by an article on the subject in the *Pall Mall Gazette* for 11th December.

MRS. GLADSTONE TO E. L. L.

"HAWARDEN CASTLE, CHESTER,
4th December 1869.

"MY DEAR MADAM,—I have received a letter written from you to Mrs. Malcolm, in which you kindly continue to take interest in our Convalescent Home, and desire to write articles in *All the Year Round* and in the *Saturday Review*. It is *very* good of you, and I am most desirous of thanking you for what you have already done. If I was in town, I should be too happy to go with you immediately to Woodford and Clapton. As it is, I could easily ask Colonel Neville to accompany you.

"I hope myself to be doing a little work the week after next in the Convalescent Homes; in the meantime, I will ask Colonel Neville to communicate with you and name a day to accompany you there. I am sure you will find many touching scenes. My plan is to sleep there a few days on

Monday or Tuesday week; perhaps you will pay us a visit there.—Believe me, yours truly,

CATH. GLADSTONE.

"*P.S.*—We have just opened a Fever Convalescent Home at Clapton, about which I am very eager. A few words from you as to the need of it might quicken the subscriptions."

In 1869 a volume of Mrs. Linton's Essays on Women was published by Routledge with the title *Ourselves*. It was republished by Messrs. Chatto & Windus in 1884 and 1893.

Her pen was now extraordinarily active. In the years 1870 and 1871 she turned out no fewer than two hundred and twenty-five articles, all written for such high-class publications as the *Saturday Review*, *All the Year Round*, and the *Queen*. And these, it must be remembered, were not the mere journeyman's work of the paragraph writer, but well thought-out essays or stories, with beginnings, middles, and ends.

On 7th January 1871 she made her first, and I fancy only, appearance in *Punch* with an article entitled "On being Taken Up and Put Down again." It ran to a column and a half, and was dignified by a pictorial initial letter by Linley Sambourne. It recounted the experiences of one who had been a literary lion of one season only to find his former patrons "Not at Home" in the next.

It was signed, "A Dog who has had his Day," and the last sentences run as follows:—

"The conclusion to which I have come is, that no honest dog will let himself be paraded as a lion if he can help it, first undergoing the humiliation of being put through his tricks, and then being kicked out of doors when the showman has had enough of him. This is not a very dignified position according to my way of thinking. But then, I am an old Growler, and see society through grey glasses, and have got over the age when everything was rose-colour, and jam-tarts the best thing out."

Amongst the letters of this date I find the following from the author of "The Angel in the House."

COVENTRY PATMORE TO E. L. L.

"HERON'S GHYLL, UCKFIELD,
31st October 1870.

"MY DEAR MADAM,—I am much gratified to hear that my verses have found so warm a welcome from you. You can do, and you prove, what I have striven and have failed to do in my verse—which seems to be, like the bat's voice, pitched in a key that the modern ear cannot catch. I admire your self-control even more than your indignation. If I were to try to write my thoughts in prose, it would be a shriek and not an articulate protest, like yours. I live here, like Ben Jonson at Hawthornden (was it not?), 'hating all mankind,' and conscious that the only use that I can make of such faculties as I have is to show by utter silence that I hold them, in the present state of things, to be of no use.

"Hoping some day to have the pleasure of making your acquaintance, I am, my dear madam, yours very truly,

"COVENTRY PATMORE."

In the following year (1871) Brantwood was sold by Linton for £1500 to Mr. Ruskin, who described the house as "a mere shed of rotten timbers and loose stone."

CHAPTER XIV

SPIRITUALISM

I SHALL here break off from the consecutive narrative to deal with a matter which had now been for some years agitating the minds of Mrs. Linton and her contemporaries.

In the later forties whispers had come from America of certain mysterious phenomena which had been first observed in the village of Hydesville, New York State. Without going into particulars, it is sufficient to say that large numbers of honest and upright people on the other side of the Atlantic were now accepting as a demonstrated fact, that the unseen or spiritual had been brought into direct communication with the seen and material world, and that, by a sort of wireless telegraphy, messages, questions and answers were passing daily and hourly between the dead and the living.

At first the report was received on this side with derision and incredulity as a Yankee tale. Later the persistence of the rumours seemed to call for investigation, and finally in 1854 public interest was aroused by the appearance in England of the American medium, Mrs. Haydon. Amongst her earliest converts were two leading men, both friends of Mrs. Linton, Robert Owen, the founder of English Socialism, and Dr. Ashburner, the colleague of Dr. Elliotson in the Mesmeric Infirmary. Later on appeared a more remarkable medium, the notorious Daniel Dunglass Home, who went through the whole range of "manifestations." Soon people were talking of little else except levitations, rappings, trance-speaking, voices in the air, visions in crystals and glasses, and elongations of the human body. Dark séances were the order of the day, and spiritualism was in the air.

Amongst those who were at once convinced of the genuineness and importance of these phenomena was Mrs. Milner-Gibson, the wife of the well-known Liberal politician. One of her friends, writing to me, says she was "a clever woman, and enthusiastic in those practices which border upon fraud. She was a great dabbler in table-turning, rapping, and the spiritualism of that day. No doubt she acted with *bona fides*."

She was devotedly attached to Mrs. Linton, whom she always addressed as "Linda," and, notwithstanding the fact that their opinions on religious matters were as the poles asunder, she declared that one of her highest ambitions was to fit herself for the friendship of one so excellent and far above her.

The following letter refers to Mrs. Milner-Gibson and the spiritualistic movement:—

CHARLES DICKENS TO E. L. L.

"GAD'S HILL PLACE, HIGHAM BY ROCHESTER, KENT,
Sunday, 16th September 1860.

"MY DEAR MRS. LINTON,—Pray do not suppose that I sent you that very unspiritual magazine for any other purpose than to keep you *au courant* to the subject. It has not in the least disturbed my equanimity.

"I hold personal inquiry on my part into these proceedings to be out of the question for two reasons. Firstly, because the conditions under which such inquiries take place—as I know in the recent case of two friends of mine, with whom I discussed them—are preposterously wanting in the commonest securities against deceit or mistake. Secondly, because the people lie so very hard, both concerning what did take place and what impression it made at the time on the inquirer.

"Mr. Hume, or Home (I rather think he has gone by both names), I take the liberty of regarding as an impostor. If he appeared on his own behalf in any controversy with me, I should take the further liberty of letting him know publicly why. But be assured that if he were demonstrated a humbug in every microscopic cell of his skin and globule of his blood, the disciples would still believe and worship.

"Mrs. Gibson is an impulsive, compassionate, affectionate woman. But as to the strength of her head;—would you be very much surprised by its making a mistake? Did you never know it much mistaken in a person or two whom it devoutly believed in?—Believe me ever faithfully your true friend, CHARLES DICKENS."

From the following note, for which I am indebted to Mr. Orrinsmith, it would appear that Mrs. Linton was an early convert, though I am bound to say that her own account of the matter was very different.

"She was absolutely credulous in spiritualistic matters. She was one of a circle assembled at the house of Mrs. Milner-Gibson, and all the tricks of the medium were there carried on with great success. Milner-Gibson never joined the party, but Mrs. Linton used to tell how he would open the room door, pop in his head, and crying, 'Well, my dear, at it again, I see!' would disappear.

"Mrs. Linton had met Home, and she described how she had seen him when seated at dinner draw himself up and kneel on the table. She thought this miraculous. I said it was a mere clever gymnastic feat. One night I accompanied her to a séance held by a Mrs. Marshall, a vulgar medium of some vogue at the time, who boasted to have command of the 'sperrits,' as she called them. The meeting was held in a second-floor room in Red Lion Street, Holborn. The only light we had was derived from the reflection of the street lamp on the ceiling. We had a most successful display, table-turning and tilting. Preposterous answers were rapt out to idiotic questions. A small tripod table was specially active in its vagaries; one of its legs was broken, and this accident certainly gave facility to its movements. Mrs. Linton was fervent in her belief, and pronounced me to be at least an agnostic if not an infidel. We saw the phosphorescent hand, heard the guitars on the floor struck by unseen hands or toes, and other marvels galore. I with some difficulty persuaded Mrs. Linton to drop her notebook pencil on the floor, in order that in picking it up I might peep underneath the table. I saw in the semi-darkness a quick scuffle of knees, and was ordered by the medium to

withdraw from the circle as a prying sceptic. On our way home we had wordy strife, but I could not move her in her belief."

In any case, her credulity was but short-lived, and the hope that in spiritualism she might find proof of revealed religion was quickly dispelled. She was not one of those who hold that

> The pleasure surely is as great
> Of being cheated as to cheat.

This is her own account of the matter—

"With others," she writes, "I became an intimate in the house of Mrs. Milner-Gibson, that large-hearted woman who opened her doors to all the exiled patriots that flocked to England as their only safe asylum, and who was as a crowned queen wandering through Bohemia. She was one of the most prominent features of London society in her day, and went through the appointed phases of the widest Liberalism, the most marked Bohemianism, the most mystical Spiritualism, and the most fervent Catholicism, proper to her kind. But in each and all, the generous heart, the loving nature, the wide full charity of divine sympathy and pity remained unchanged. . . . When the well-known floating medium got hold of her, her salon was given up to table-turning and séances, wherein she herself was the most deceived and the most credulous. Great efforts were made to convince me of the truth of the phenomena exhibited. . . .

"I was at this house when the notorious levitating medium was said to have floated to the ceiling. The story is simply this. Mr. Home was in his usual place at the end of the chain of experimenters, where the circular table touched the jamb of the window—leaving a free space between him and mademoiselle the governess, who always sat opposite to him. Our hostess was always on his left hand. The room was almost pitch-dark—lighted only from the distant lamp in the mews which this window faced. Suddenly Mr. Home left his seat and came over to where I was sitting. He leaned over my chair and spoke to my neighbour and me, saying that the spirits were preparing something, he did not know what. The next moment we heard the sound of a piece of

furniture moving across the room. It was a light *chaise longue*, which stood by the wall in a line with our chairs.

"'The spirits want me to get on this,' he said; and forthwith he sat down on the couch.

"There was a certain man in the company, called Smith of Peckham, who had been an atheist, but whom Mr. Home had converted to spiritualism and Christianity. To him this medium was a Christ. He clasped his hands and knelt on the ground.

"'Let me go too!' he said, praying the Lord rather than making a request to his brother man.

"His high priest gave a rather ungracious assent, and the two moved off; but Smith of Peckham was found to be inconvenient, so was soon sent back to his old place at the table.

"There was a large mirror over a console table at the end of the wall, facing the window; and near to this was a heavy old-fashioned ottoman, with a strong and serviceable centre-piece.

"In a short time Mr. Home said he was floating up to the ceiling, and in the dim light of the room we could see that a dark body was between us and the mirror. The voice seemed to ascend, and we heard the sound of a slight scratching. Then the voice came down. Mr. Home said he had scratched a cross on the ceiling, and called for lights. There was a great hunt for the small grains of plaster on the floor, and the case was recorded in the spiritualist journal as an undoubted instance of floating.

"There was nothing to have prevented Mr. Home from drawing the *chaise longue* to him by means of a string round the front two legs, moving it by his own feet and muscles; standing on the centre-piece of the ottoman, and, with a knife tied to the end of a stick, scratching a cross on the ceiling. The rest was easy to ventriloquism and certain to credulity.

"At other times he showed the hands—luminous hands—which mademoiselle the governess said she felt forming themselves in her dress. These hands played with the tassel and strings of the blinds, and were phosphorescent. One,

coal-black, was the emblem of superstition; another—covered with what they all said was a spiritual veil or refulgent kind of mask, and a cambric pocket-handkerchief—was the sign of faith. But as no one was allowed to investigate, and as to express doubt would have been impolite, things were received with acclaim by most of those present, and only a few of us had the honesty of silence."

Mrs. Linton would have made so useful an ally that Mr. Home arranged a special manifestation for her benefit.

"I must," she writes, "explain the foundations. One of my friends had had a little child of which I had been passionately fond. It had been named after me; I had adopted it for my own; and the whole story was patent to the world. At the time of which I write the child was dead. . . . By all my own people I had always been called Liz or Lizzie. By our hostess and the whole group of her friends who were mine, and by this group only, I was called Eliza. The child had been christened Elizabeth, and was called Lizzie.

"In the midst of the usual array of luminous hands, this night, came a round shining thing, which mademoiselle the governess and Mr. Home the medium both cried out at once was a child's head. For whom? The guests were numbered, and the spirits rapped, when I was indicated. This spiritual child was for me. This was my first personal experience of a thing of this kind, and for the moment I was overcome.

"'This means a little child of whom I was very fond,' I said in a half-whisper to my neighbour. 'It was called after me and dedicated to me.'

"'Yes,' said Mr. Home, as if speaking in a dream. He was in a trance. 'This little child was Eliza on earth, as it is Eliza in heaven, and its mother thanks you in heaven for your loving care of it on earth. She is standing by you now, blessing you and watching over you.'

"This bad shot" (the calling of the child by a totally inapplicable name) "saved me from all after danger of credulity, and left me with a clear mind and untroubled senses to watch and weigh all that I saw."

I have been fortunate enough to discover an account of the same séance from the pen of a believer, possibly "Smith of Peckham." It is to be found on page 142 *et seq.* of Home's *Incidents in my Life*, First Series, and runs as follows:—

"After a short time there rose slowly in the space made by the window a most lovely hand of a female—we saw also part of the beautiful arm as it held it up aloft for some time. We were all greatly amazed. This hand was so transparent and luminous, and so unearthly and angelic, that our hearts were filled with gratitude towards the Creator for permitting so wonderful a manifestation. The hand was visible to us more from the internal light which seemed to stream as it were out of it, than from the external light of the moon. As soon as it slowly vanished, mademoiselle—who sat next to the open space—saw another hand forming itself close to her; and a man's hand was raised and placed upon the table, far more earthly and lifelike in appearance, and one that I thought I recognised (we were subsequently told that I was right in conjecture). Then came a dear baby-hand; then the baby (Mrs. L.'s adopted child) showed its head; and finally, spirit hands held up the little child, so that all nine of us saw her shoulders and waist. After this a hand and arm rose luminous and beautiful, covered with a white transparent drapery; and this hand remained visible to us all for at least five minutes, and made us courteous and graceful gestures. . . . Then we were told they would show us 'the emblem of superstition'; and a black shrivelled hand arose. On some of us remarking that we could not see it well, the curtains were at once moved aside, and the blind drawn away from the top of the window. It was beyond the reach of any of us; and they then showed us the hand again, so that we all could see it. The 'emblem of truth' was then shown. This was more beautiful than all the rest—a fairy-like fountain of apparently clear sparkling water, which threw up showers of rays, vanishing from our sight like mist, and dwelling on the memory as perfection. After this it was rapped out, 'We can do no more.'"

Here is the same believer's account of the "levitation."

"After a pause, Mr. Home said he felt as if he were about to

be lifted up. He moved from the table, and shortly he said, 'I am rising'—but we could not see him—'they have put me on my back.' I asked, 'Will you kindly bring him, as much as possible, toward the window, so that we may see him'; and at once he was floated with his feet horizontally into the light of the window, so that we all saw his feet and a part of his legs resting or floating on the air like a feather, about six feet from the ground, and three feet above the height of the table. He was floated into the dark; and he exclaimed, 'They have turned me round, and I am coming towards you.' I saw his head and face, the same height as before, and as if floating on air instead of water. He then floated back and came down and walked up to, and sat on the edge of the table we were at, when the table began to rise with him on it. Mr. Home was then taken behind to the settee next to me, and while there we heard sounds several times as of someone giving utterance to a monosyllable in the middle of the room. Feeling a pressure against my chair, I looked and saw that the ottoman had been brought along the floor about six feet, no one touching it, and close to Mr. Home. He said, 'I suppose it is for me to rest on,'—he lay down, and the ottoman went back to its original position. 'Oh! I am getting excited; let some one come and sit with me.' I went and sat beside him; he took my hand; and in about a minute, and without any muscular action, he gently floated away from me, and was lost in the darkness. He kept talking to let us know where he was. We heard his voice in various parts of the farther end of the room, as if near the ceiling. He then cried out, 'Oh! they have brought me a cushion to sit upon—I am sitting on it—they are taking it away.' Just then the tassel of the cushion of another ottoman in the room struck me on my hair and forehead as if coming from the ceiling, and the cushion was deposited at my feet on the floor, falling as if a snowflake. I next saw the shadow of his body as he floated along near the ceiling. He said, 'I wish I had a pencil to make a mark on the ceiling. I have made a cross with my nail.' He came down near the door, and after a pause he was taken up again; but I did not see him, but heard his voice as if near the ceiling. Again he came

down, and shortly returned to the table we were at; and the sounds on the table bade us 'Good-night.'"

Another friend, "one of the most convinced of Mr. Home's dupes," expatiated to Mrs. Linton warmly on the supernatural power which enabled a pencil to lie on a clinging velvet cloth without rolling off when the table was tilted to a certain angle. She tried the experiment at home, and found that, by careful manipulation, she could tilt her own table at even a more acute angle than the medium had done, and that neither the pencil nor the glasses would fall.

When she told this to her friend, "he was exceedingly angry, and what had been a very pleasant friendship came to an abrupt and sudden end."

Another friend who had it much at heart to convert her to the faith, was Dr. John Ashburner, the translator of Reichenbach, and the author of *Studies in the Philosophy of Animal Magnetism and Spiritualism.*

"At his house," she writes, "I saw, among others, the medium who writhed like a demoniac when the spirits were writing in red letters on his large, white, fine-skinned arm a name that should carry conviction to the soul of the unbeliever.

"This man had two tricks—that of this skin-writing, which was soon found out; and that of reading with the tips of his fingers the names written on small pieces of paper, folded up into pellets and flung into a heap on the table. This sleight-of-hand was respectable; but I caught the trick, and told Dr. Ashburner what I had seen. The dear old man did not believe me, and he did believe Mr. Foster, the medium, even after he found out that he had been in prison for felony.

"I could fill a volume with my spiritualistic experiences, suspicions, and silent detections of imposture. I have never seen anything whatever that might not have been done by trick and collusion, and I have seen almost all the mediums. Never, anywhere, has there been allowed the smallest investigation, nor have the most elementary precautions been taken against imposture; and the amount of patent falsehood swallowed open-mouthed has been to me a sorry text on which to preach a eulogium on our enlightenment.

"Yet all the time I was yearning to believe—to be forced by irrefragable proofs to accept one undoubted authority, which would have ended for ever certain gnawing pains. Those proofs never came. On the contrary, with every séance at which I assisted came increased certainty of imposture. And yet now, at the end of it all, though I have never seen a medium who was not a patent trickster, I believe that there is an uncatalogued and perhaps undeveloped human force which makes what the Americans call a magnetic man, and which is the substratum of truth underlying the falsehoods of spiritualism, the deceptions of hysteria, and the romances of religious fervour. We have not said the final word yet on the development of man; and this uncatalogued force may be one of the chief factors in the sum of future progress.

"So far there may be truth in what we hear; but when heavy women are brought bodily through the air and dropped clean through roofs and walls, when notes fly from India to London, and when spirits materialise themselves and put on hair which is made up of cells and fibres and pigments like growing human hair, and dress in clothes well cut and stitched together with ordinary thread, beside being loaded with Manchester dressing—then, I think, the common sense of the world should revolt in indignation at these patent falsehoods and frauds, and the weak should be protected from the cruel craft of the unscrupulous.

"What will not people believe? I remember poor old Dr. Ashburner telling me a story of how once, when he was sitting alone at night, in sore perplexity as to ways and means, a knock came to the street door. He opened it, and saw on the pavement an unknown man bestriding a black horse. Without a word, this visitor silently thrust into his hand a packet of Bank of England notes, then dashed off down the street, and was no more seen. The notes were to the value of five hundred pounds, and were given by the spirits.

"If so, were those spirits thieves or forgers? For these Bank of England notes must have been stolen, either from the bank itself or from some private person; or, if made by

the spirits themselves, they were forgeries, and the bank would have to suffer. But because the transactions of the Bank of England, like those of nature, are so large as to appear illimitable to us, we do not realise that not one single five-pound note is issued without the utmost accuracy of registration and balance, and that therefore a spiritual theft or forgery of five hundred pounds would as certainly be detected, and would as certainly result in the loss of some individual, as if it had been money taken out of one's own private purse.

"It was, however, like arguing against the miracle of the loaves and fishes, because corn is made only by translation of material through assimilation, and is built up cell by cell, and fishes cannot be fashioned without milt and spawn and development, save at the cost of upsetting the whole balance of everything. The dear old man only lamented my blindness, which far exceeded his own, he said sorrowfully. But my Sadduceeism was immovable, and I could not see my way to the spiritual origin of those bank notes—if, indeed, they ever existed out of the realms of fancy at all. For, after he became blind, and his imagination was neither checked nor controlled by his senses, Dr. Ashburner fell into that state of mental haze where the boundary lines between fact and fancy are clean swept away."

Thus we see that Mrs. Linton did not doubt the existence of those "uncatalogued forces" which underlie the mesmeric theory, from Jar-phoonk in the East to Braidism and the latest discoveries of the electro-biologists in the West. But she denied that there was any proof in these phenomena of a spiritual as distinct from a material existence.

In going through her correspondence, I came across a letter from Mr. Sinnett, of a later date, but germane to the subject, in which, writing with perfect kindness and courtesy, he yet straightly charged her with "resolutely turning away from the prospect which her higher self longed to believe."

From this it was clear that she had had dealings with the theosophists, whom, rightly or wrongly, I take to be the latter-day representatives of the spiritualists. I sent the letter to

Mr. Sinnett, and received from him the following interesting and frank reply:—

"27 LEINSTER GARDENS, W.,
18th May 1899.

"DEAR SIR,—The letter you send me reminds me of a time when Mrs. Linton used often to visit us and meet at our house many people concerned with and interested in theosophical study and psychic investigations. Of course I myself constantly talked with her of such matters, endeavouring to convey to her the assurance I had myself reached, that trustworthy knowledge was to be obtained concerning other states of human consciousness besides this (of the physical plane), with which we are all familiar. The attitude of mind in which I generally found her was one of keen interest in the views I held (or the knowledge which I conceived myself to possess), coupled with what she used to describe as an ever-present terror lest she should be led into believing something which in spite of all appearances might not be true. This apprehension was emphasised in her mind by the consciousness, of which she often spoke to me, that in her youth she had been susceptible in a high degree to mesmeric influence.

"I fancy the letter you forward me may have related to the conversation of one particular afternoon at our house (about the year 1884) which I remember, when Mrs. Linton happened to meet there three or four of our intimate friends (the late Dr. Anna Kingsford among the number), all of whom were absolutely familiar in their personal experience with super-physical phenomena of various kinds, and to whom the *fact* that such phenomena took place—which was at that time the belief Mrs. Linton feared to entertain lest it should be false—seemed such a long-passed threshold of knowledge that doubts on that subject had a ludicrous aspect. I remember Mrs. Linton asking some of our friends with impressive gravity had they themselves personal experience of such and such occurrences, and when they gave her that unqualified assurance, I remember that at last she sprang up from her seat, saying, 'If I stay any longer I shall be mesmerised.' Probably it was in sequence with that little incident that my letter was written.

"As far as I know, Mrs. Linton's attitude of mind about super-physical knowledge generally remained, up to the last,

pretty much as I have described it above, but you may be interested in one recollection I have bearing on the subject. During her residence at Queen Anne's Mansions, Mrs. Linton had one specially bad illness in which she all but died. After her recovery she told me that at the worst crisis of the illness, when those around her thought she was actually dying, or had died, she remembered floating away as it seemed to her in space, borne as a child might be borne in the arms of some great motherly creature, and bathed in a sense of wonderful peace, contentment, and happiness. And, curiously enough, she told me that during this period the thought crossed her mind, 'Mr. Sinnett ought to know of this.' Remembering this thought, she said she felt it a duty to tell me of what had occurred or seemed to occur, but she added impressively, 'See what it was that put an end to that vision! A dose of brandy!' Of course I pointed out that the dose of brandy had stimulated the energy of the magnetic tie between body and soul just on the point of breaking, and that the vision was a glimpse of reality clothed in her recollection with some imaginary circumjacent details. I think she was more impressed by the experience described than her materialistic friends would have supposed probable, but I do not claim to have ever drawn her away from the resolutely agnostic position in all such matters, in which, as it seemed to her, the only intellectual safety lay. Mind you, her mental attitude was honestly agnostic, and removed as far from the dogmatically denying attitude of the commonplace materialist, as from the positive knowledge of the experienced psychic student.—Yours very truly, A. P. SINNETT."

In describing this last incident to my wife, Mrs. Linton gave rather a different account, saying that it was the sound of her adopted daughter's voice calling to her, "Bones! Bones!" (her pet name) that seemed to drag her back to life. Mrs. Hartley, as will be seen, confirms this account of the matter. Mrs. Linton had often declared her belief that, if she were dying, and Mrs. Hartley used the old familiar charm, she would be able to struggle back to consciousness.

The foregoing account of Mrs. Linton's spiritualistic and theosophical experiences goes to confirm what I think all who knew her easily discovered—that she was not one of

those who wantonly deny the truth of things just because they may be outside their own experience. To the best of her ability (and none was ever humbler in estimating her powers of logical reasoning) she would honestly investigate the evidence for and against. Further than this she could not go. It was with her rational belief or nescience, and by doing her best she was satisfied that the responsibility was at any rate shifted from her shoulders.

It might of course have been happier for her if she had been mindful of Helps's advice, not to toil at sweeping away the mist, but to ascend a little and overlook it altogether, but this was foreign to her nature.

CHAPTER XV

1872–1876

IN 1872, Mrs. Linton moved to Hayter House, No. 238 Marylebone Road.

The engraved heading to this year in her work-book consists of two hands clasped and a third laid over them as if tightening the bond. They are labelled "Centre," "Revolutionaire," and "Polonaise," and underneath is the word "Laboramus." Above and below she has written the words, "*Joshua* published."

This manuscript legend refers to the publication in the following winter of what was in some respects the most remarkable and the most successful of all her writings. The full title was, *The True History of Joshua Davidson, Christian and Communist.*

Writing of it after Mrs. Linton's death, the *Athenæum* said it was "an exceedingly clever pamphlet disguised in the shape of a story, and Joshua was not a creature of flesh and blood, but an exponent of the writer's views. It was a great success (and a welcome success, for the author's popularity had waned since she wrote *Grasp your Nettle*), and she never lost the position she (now) attained. It quite altered her standing in the world of letters."

This of course refers to a slightly later date than the initial publication, for the first edition (issued by Messrs. Strahan & Co.) was anonymous. The book immediately attracted great attention, and the author's name soon appeared on the title-page. Within three months a third edition was called for, and by the year 1890, when the publication was taken over by Messrs. Methuen & Co., it had reached its tenth. In 1896 it took its place in Mr. Stead's Penny Series.

Amongst others to whom it particularly appealed was Mr. Frederic Harrison, who writes, "It afforded me new and singular matter for reflection." Another fervent admirer was that singularly misunderstood and grossly libelled lover of humanity, Charles Bradlaugh, who immediately bought a thousand copies for distribution.

Another was John Bright. The Warden of Merton, in his lately published *Memorials and Impressions*, tells how "the Tribune of the People," at one of his house parties, gave "a short résumé" of *Joshua Davidson* with so much fervour and pathos as to reveal the secret of his influence over large audiences.

A biting satire on modern Christianity, the book was, for those days, a daring innovation. The story which is put into the mouth of one of the protagonist's disciples is that of a Cornish carpenter's son, "who deliberately set himself to live and act in all respects as did that other carpenter's son and 'David's son'—Jesus. As the book was written before slumming was fashionable, there was nothing extravagant in the assumption that he was scorned by society for consorting with thieves and prostitutes. As toleration in religious thought was then far behind what it is in the present day, there was not any glaring want of probability in presenting him as a martyr at the hands of the Church whose dogmatic Christianity he could not accept. Joshua Davidson was in the end kicked to death by the very men for whom he had worked during the best years of his life."

Destructively, the book is a powerful indictment. Constructively, it is as weak as Seeley in the "Sixties" and Beeby in the "Nineties." Much, however, as there is to find fault with in it, no one can, I think, read it without realising the burning love and sympathy for humanity by which it is inspired. There is the true ring of righteous indignation at the iniquities of our social conditions. There is the perfervid hatred of shams, and there are the tears in the voice of one crying in the dark and getting no answer.

These are the closing words—

"Like Joshua in early days, my heart burns within me and my mind is unpiloted and unanchored. I cannot, being

a Christian, accept the inhumanity of political economy and the obliteration of the individual in averages; yet I cannot reconcile modern science with Christ. Everywhere I see the sifting of competition, and nowhere Christian protection of weakness; everywhere dogma adored, and nowhere Christ realised. And again I ask, Which is true—modern society in its class strife and consequent elimination of its weaker elements, or the brotherhood and communism taught by the Jewish carpenter of Nazareth? Who will answer me?—who will make the dark thing clear?"

Amongst others she sent a presentation copy to Mr. Voysey with the following inscription, "'John'" (the name of the supposed writer of the book) "hopes that Mr. Voysey will do him the honour of reading his little history. He thinks Mr. Voysey will maybe sympathise with his dead friend, and his own endeavour to make the truth known."

Mr. Voysey replied, expressing great appreciation, and asking "John" to break his anonymity to him. Her answer was as follows:—

E. L. L. to Rev. Charles Voysey.

"*26th February* 1873.

"My dear Sir,—I will not tell you who I am yet, because you may not like me or my book when you know me. I have never been more touched by anything than by your frank and affectionate letter. It will always be to me a ray of the purest sunshine, a dear and exquisite note of music. Some day I hope to know you. I have seen and been hurriedly introduced to you, but you will not remember me. I question if you would even know my name again.

"The preface to the third edition is not yet out. I have not had the proofs, but I have said a few words I hope boldly and yet reverently. Neither do I think Joshua or Christ wholly right. But if Christ is not right as a guide, an example, why maintain his divinity? Why make us confess what we cannot believe, and hold only to the good of the doctrine, not to the mythology grafted on it? The book means simply a plea for sincerity. Let us take our choice—Christ and communism, Christ and love, Christ and charity,

—or science, and the scientific arrangement of society and the abolition of all pretence of Christianity. It is the sham of the world that I have always hated, I who have been one of the first outspeakers.

"The *New Koran* I have not yet seen, nor even heard of. I should like to read it. We do not want irreverence, nor (for the mass of people) cold negation: and yet how little we know, and how dark it all is!—but we do want a faith to which we can live up, not one that we confess on Sundays and defy all the week after.

"I shall go and hear you next Sunday, and see my unknown 'friend and brother.' (I have heard you before, and only felt you did not go far enough.) But I should like to send you the preface to the third edition before you speak of *Joshua*.

"I send you my friendship, brave heart, for what it is worth; and I am, till further known, your brother too,

"JOHN."

This was his reply—

REV. CHARLES VOYSEY TO "JOHN."

"CAMDEN HOUSE, DULWICH,
26th February 1873.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I little thought of the pleasure which I was giving you by my few most sincere words of thanks and sympathy. I am glad you have written, and I am deeply obliged to you for telling me the design of your work. I will abstain from public reference to *Joshua* till I read your new preface. I go heart and soul with you in your hatred of *shams*. Of all shams in this world the most shameless is that of *professing Christians* in their sham belief in their 'Great Example,' as he is called.

"I am sending through Strahan & Co. a copy of *New Koran* and some recent sermons on Atheism. I feel as if I had had a treasure and lost it in having been introduced to you (among so many hundreds), and having been left without any clue to find it.

"But I shall trust you to disclose yourself to me some day, if even you are a Bradlaugh or an Odger. The man who wrote that history of 'Jesus the Son of David,' A.D. 1872, must be my friend and brother.—Most truly yours,

"CHARLES VOYSEY."

E. L. L. to Rev. Charles Voysey.

"The Falls, Llandago, Coleford, S. Wales.

"My dear Mr. Voysey,—I could not find even that little moment of time before I left London in which I could write to you with your books. I hope you have received them. I left them to my maid to put up and send. Thank you for them very much. I need hardly say how much I admire them and how I sympathise with your courage; your *faith* is more robust than mine. In abandoning the dogma of Revelation, it seems to me that we are necessarily plunged into a sea of absolute Doubt. The immortality of the soul, the presence of a God, the destinies of the human race, and the part we play in the great whole—all seems to me a mere chaos. And this is where I think we looked for you to go further and to make confession of Doubt brightened only by Hope. Conviction means nothing. Conviction is the product of a man's present state, and is no proof at all. But it is a comfortless state to feel floating in darkness unanchored, unrooted, only hoping that in due time the Light will come, here or hereafter! or if it does not, then *this* burning heart and yearning thought will be stilled, and it does not much signify to the dead in their graves what truth is!

"I write, you see, now in my own name. So many people know that I am the author of *J. D.* that it would be affectation to keep up the disguise to you only. Thank you very, very heartily for your kind words. By the bye, are *you* the author of the *New Koran?* It is a most remarkable book, and excellently done.

"I hope some day to shake hands with you again, and to know that you respect 'Mrs. Lynn Linton' as much as you thought you would like 'John.'—Most sincerely yours,

"E. Lynn Linton."

"I went twice to St. George's Hall, once on the 'baptism' Sunday. I liked your service and *you* very much."

The following extract is from an enormously long letter of a later date on the same subject. It is a good example of the trouble which she was ever ready to take for those by whom her help was honestly sought. To one who was spending long hours daily at her desk to produce her

necessary "tale" of work for the public, and whose private correspondence was enormous, it was no light thing to give the time and energy requisite to the writing, only for the eyes of a chance stranger, of what is no less than an elaborate dissertation. But she took her mission seriously, and here was some one in the dark. It was worth while to do the best she could for a brother-man. I can only find room here for the closing sentences—

E. L. L. TO Mr. E. K. FRANCIS.

"If you are still a Christian, that is, a believer in Christ's absolute divinity, and that this man was God made manifest in the flesh, live after his doctrines and example. Though all the world pass you by and deride you, be faithful to your God and Saviour. You will be a martyr in a sense, but you will have your conscience clear. But if you find that the divinity of Christ is a myth like other myths, that his philosophy was partial and irregular, now fine now foolish, now masculine now childish, now possible now impracticable, and that when tested by your reason it is much the same as other early philosophies founded on thought not fact, on metaphysics not science, then accept the good and reject the folly, as with Plato and Aristotle and Socrates and Marcus Aurelius. See Christ as a noble, pure-hearted, enthusiastic man, not a hair's breadth in advance of his day in knowledge or economic wisdom. Then live your own life nobly—live for all that you *have*—humanity, your best sense of truth, of uprightness, of self-sacrifice, and unselfishness. Make your own brick perfect in the living temple of Society; add your unit to the great treasury of progress and true morality, and be content to leave in the dark those things which no man yet has discovered. The providence of God, an after life, the meaning of life, the final destinies of man, all these are as dark, as much hidden as what you will be doing at this hour twenty years hence. But a noble life is a *fact*, and the only fact worth living for—the only seed that bears fruit of an imperishable kind. . . . Very faithfully yours,

"E. LYNN LINTON."

From the foregoing it will be recognised, by all who honestly try to understand her, that Mrs. Linton was no

merely fanatical opposer of Christianity. It was with the modern misnamed Christianity, in which the spirit of Christ's teaching was obscured, that she had her quarrel. True, she believed that much of the original teaching itself was out of date, that it was ante-scientific in an age of science—but she recognised what the essence of it really was—"Make your brick perfect in the temple of Society; add your mite to the great treasury of progress and true morality, and be content to leave in the dark those things which no man yet has discovered."

Nor was she one of those who despised where she did not agree. "Nothing," she wrote, "is so like insanity as that kind of ill-temper which puts itself in opposition to all the world; and the man who thinks no one in the right but himself is, for all the practical purposes of moral life, as insane as if he had crowned himself with straw and called himself Emperor in Bedlam."

Tender, indeed often regretful, was her love for the old traditions in which she had been nurtured, and real was her admiration and perhaps envy of those whose lives, sustained and fortified by religion, were noble and true. Though truth to herself did not permit her to accept revealed religion, she was not slow to admire its beauties and to be thankful for many of its results. None ever heard her scoff at those she believed sincere, but biting was her scorn of cant and ignorant dogmatism.

The following extract from a letter written at this period is sufficient answer to those who have charged her with intolerance:—

E. L. L. TO ROSEMARY CRAWSHAY.

"HAYTER HOUSE, 238 MARYLEBONE ROAD,
17th May '74.

". . . I am glad you did show that mark of respect to the R. C. priest. I believe in tolerance as the only possible method; and having the courage of one's opinions as the only weapon of which civilised folk should make use. The tolerance we claim for ourselves we ought to be able to accord to others, and to trust to science, education, and a free press for the enlightenment of men's minds."

That she found it a tough matter, however, to give the educated "R. C." credit for honesty, is clear enough from the following letter written many years later to my wife. She had been reading the excellent translation of Gregorovius lately made by her friend Mrs. Hamilton:—

E. L. L. TO Mrs. G. S. LAYARD.

". . . I do not know a sadder, a more pregnant history than that of the early years of the Church, when she had set before her the definite aim of universal supremacy. Gregorovius is long and dry, but, for those who care to wade, it is full of the richest treasures of knowledge. Every statement is backed and supported by authorities, but it is, as I said, a nightmare. It is like watching some great crawling octopus slowly creeping over a living but terrified giant and strangling him, he too much terrified to resist. In all the quarrels between the emperors and kings with the pope, the one great threat of eternal damnation overbore all other considerations. Heroes became poltroons, soldiers weaker than women, kings laid aside their royalty at the feet of the pope, and one kicked off the crown of the king as he knelt, to show his supremacy over all men, no matter what their rank. And all was founded on that one doctrine—the everlasting fires of Hell, to which the Spiritual Power had the right and the authority to consign every living soul! How any one who can read can be a Roman Catholic is more than I am able to understand. Both Gibbon and Gregorovius are revelations, but the latter is the fuller and more precise."

On 15th November 1874, Mrs. Linton's new novel, *Patricia Kemball*, was published in three volumes. During the year she had also found time to write eighty-six articles for the *Queen*, *Saturday Review*, *Cornhill*, *All the Year Round*, *New Quarterly*, *World*, and the *Illustrated Sporting Gazette* (Christmas Number).

"Dear *Patricia*, I have a very tender place in my heart for her," she said to me on one of the rare occasions on which she could be persuaded to talk of her own work. I had told her that I had picked up for a few pence a copy of the novel, bound up from the parts of *Temple Bar*, in which it had run

serially. She was much touched by this evidence of the appreciation of her work by some one unknown. It is the most idyllic and breezy of all her novels, and had a considerable success. She dedicated it to her sister, Mrs. Gedge. It was republished as late as 1893 by Messrs. Chatto & Windus, with a capital frontispiece by her friend, George du Maurier.

The following letter from that artist refers to her next novel, *The Atonement of Leam Dundas*, which began its serial appearance in the August number of the *Cornhill*, 1875. After it had been running for some time, she appears to have written to du Maurier complaining of the treatment it was receiving at the hand of its illustrator. This is his reply, and, in view of the extraordinary success of *Trilby* and *The Martian* in later days, it is interesting to note how little he dreamed of the gold mine which lay ready to his hand as author-artist.

GEORGE DU MAURIER TO E. L. L.

"NEW GROVE HOUSE, HAMPSTEAD HEATH,
22nd March '76.

"DEAR MRS. LINTON,—I cannot attempt to reconcile author and artist, and do not wish to stick up for my friend's illustrations, but I can assure you that he is honestly doing his best according to his lights. I have always done the same, but do not think I ever succeeded in pleasing an author.

"I have once or twice begged George Smith to let me do for him every month in the *Cornhill* a drawing from a subject of my own choice, so difficult do I nearly always find it to adapt myself to the letterpress of another, but he seems to prefer the tale being illustrated—why, I cannot make out! Those who are interested in the story care very little for the illustration as a rule, and I don't think bad or good illustrations ever made or marred a book, except when it came out as a Christmas book, or an *edition de luxe*. I hope to have a talk with you on the subject, however; we are always at home of Thursday afternoons, and shall be made happy by your coming.—With kind regards from both, yours very sincerely,

"G. DU MAURIER."

Leam Dundas Mrs. Linton looked upon as the best of all her novels, but it was by no means so well received as its immediate predecessor. The public probably found the character of the heroine too sombre, and resented didactics where they looked for amusement.

Leam herself is a very remarkable creation. Her narrowness and her depth, her boundless loyalty, her self-forgetting passion, the exclusiveness of her love so nearly akin to cruelty, and her fierce humility, are on a very high plane of excellence, but the subsidiary characters are unconvincing and unattractive.

The wastefulness of Nature, or perhaps we should rather say with Carlyle, "the infinite rigour of law," must, I think, strike every one who now reads these novels. One is astonished that such cleverness, such excellences of workmanship, should be destined to so short a life. Touched by genius, such a story as *Paul Ferroll* still holds its place within easy reach upon our shelves, notwithstanding the fact that its writer outrages all the probabilities, and is guilty of grammar beneath the contempt of the abecedarian; whilst here we have work of really high technical quality, which, by lack of ever so small a pinch of the essential salt, grows flat and stale within a decade or two. As in others of her books, the excellent descriptions of Cumberland scenery are of real value. But unfortunately the public will not buy subject pictures they do not like for the sake of the landscapes in which they are set.

That the book possessed certain qualities generally lacking in her work, is evident from the fact that Charles Ross, the then editor of *Judy*, was so struck by its dramatic possibilities that he adapted it with a view to theatrical production. Whether it was ever actually staged I have been unable to discover.

This same year, a volume of stories, entitled *The Mad Willoughbys and Other Tales*, the title-story of which had originally appeared in the *New Quarterly*, was published by Messrs. Ward, Lock & Tyler.

Mrs. Linton was still on the war-path with articles on the Woman Question. Two in *Belgravia* this year — "Frisky

Matrons" and "Woman's Place in Nature"—attracted particular attention and aroused keen controversy. The last was looked upon by Dr. Anna Kingsford and others of the opposition as a personal attack.

From 1875 to 1879, Mrs. Linton was destined to be a wanderer. Still retaining the half of Hayter House as her base, she spent most of her time on the Continent. The immediate cause would seem to have been the marriage of her valued maid, Sadler, who had been with her for many years. This, combined with the simultaneous estrangement of one who was very dear to her, but was not worthy of her affection, determined her to seek distraction in change of life and scene.

In the spring of 1876 we find her in Paris, foregathering with Professor W. K. Clifford and his bride. This was the beginning of a lifelong friendship by which she set great store. The brilliant mental qualities of both at once commanded her admiration and respect, and this admiration soon developed into a very deep affection.

Mrs. Clifford tells me that she and her husband were much amused at a dinner which Mrs. Linton insisted on giving them at one of the Duval restaurants, when she suddenly said, with a tragic air, that she had often reproached herself for not giving them a wedding present. Professor Clifford urged in extenuation that she had not known Mrs. Clifford before and had only known him very slightly. But she would not accept the excuse, and said, with characteristic eagerness, that when public men, who are doing good work, married, the world ought to show its interest. They did not meet again for four or five months, when, sure enough, Mrs. Linton produced the wedding present, which was certainly not the less valued because it had been deferred.

Later in the year we find her at Florence, whence she writes—

E. L. L. to Mrs. Gedge.

"I am trying to get as much of my book done before I move as I can, and I give myself very little time for play. . . . So

many people have called on me—half the English in Florence —that I have spent and lost all my time in visiting. The very thing that I thought to escape in leaving England! . . . Among the people who called were Ouida and the Landors. . . . Both live about three miles out of Florence in different directions. Ouida has the most splendid villa, magnificently furnished and standing in large English-like grounds, with a view that would make you happy for life. She has a huge dog, or rather three immense creatures, horses, ponies, and small dogs by the dozen, and she dresses magnificently. She makes an *immense* fortune by her books. . . .

"The Landors' visit was of a sad interest. Old Mrs. Landor is really not unlike the dear old man himself. Her hair is white now, not golden, and she speaks something in the same way as he did. She is dressed in a half-dressing-gown of grey, and an old-fashioned cap, but very, very kind to me. So was the daughter Julia. . . . Miss Landor bought the house, and lives there with the old mother. . . . It is full of pictures—a beautiful place, and there were the terraces and walks and myrtles, etc., that the dear old man used to speak of. . . .

"I am working hard at my book,[1] which is going to be *pretty*. I have done only five numbers yet—that is, I am two months only ahead. We stay here till the 8th of January, I think, then go to Rome for six weeks, and then to Naples for about three weeks. . . . The weather to-day is heaven, but we have had the most uncertain and abominable weather you can imagine. For the last week it has been damper than England—wet and damp, as well as honest rain—a peculiar kind of thing that goes through every part of you and the house; "sirocco," it is called—one can scarcely breathe in it. . . . Then we have the tramontana or north, to which our worst east is a baby. No, the winter climate of Florence is not good, and very, very trying. . . . As for flowers, they do not exist. London is out and out the best-supplied city that I have ever seen. You have to pay for things, certainly, but you can get them. Here neither love nor money can give them to you. In the spring I believe it is a paradise for flowers, but not now. The market is a narrow, dirty, filthy little street, where you buy fried fish and everything else. The side-walks scarcely hold two abreast in the broadest and

[1] *The World Well Lost.*

finest street, and for the most part we have to walk *in* the streets with the carts and carriages at our heads and heels. I expect every day to be run over; but they drive very carefully, and one never sees a horse down nor hears of an accident. But the grand old buildings and quaint narrow streets, and the lines against the sky of roof and tower, etc., compensate for everything. All the streets are paved in large slabs, and when they are covered with mud they are like glass. How the horses keep their feet I do not know."

It was soon after the meeting with the Cliffords that another friendship of the most intimate nature was cemented, which was destined to colour the rest of Mrs. Linton's life. As the lady to whom she became so devotedly attached is now living, it would be impertinent on my part to say more than a little, and I shall leave it to her to do most of the telling.

Miss Beatrice Sichel, daughter of the late Mr. Julius Sichel, was a young girl at the time of Mrs. Linton's first visit to her father's house. On his death she was sent by her guardians to school in Brighton. Two years later, Mrs. Linton invited her to spend her holidays with her at Hennequeville, and subsequently it was arranged that she should accompany her to Italy, each paying her own expenses.

"For four years," Mrs. Linton wrote, "all went merry as a wedding-bell. There was not a hitch anywhere; not a cross heavier than a shred of pith; not a stumbling-block bigger than a straw. We got on together in the perfect accord proper to people whose intimacy never degenerated into familiarity, and who respected themselves too much not to respect one another.

"Those four years were the happiest of my life — the only perfect years when I was free from clouds or storms. I had as my daily companion this dear child, whom I loved like my daughter. Our joint moneys . . . made a home of sufficient luxury for all moderate wishes; and I was both happy and proud when I introduced my pretty girl to my friends as some one claiming all men's admiration. For her sake I once more took up the lapsed habits of society, and went out into the world I had so long abandoned. I liked

to see how much she was admired, and how prettily she bore herself among the youths and men who fluttered round her, and singed their wings to no purpose save their own pain."

In due time Miss Sichel married, and although the closest friendship and love remained, Mrs. Linton was again alone. The following reminiscences supplied by Mrs. Hartley will show how fully Mrs. Linton's affection was reciprocated.

NOTE BY MRS. HARTLEY (*née* SICHEL).

"Mrs. Lynn Linton came to stay with us in Dinard, Brittany, when I was a young girl of fifteen. She told me afterwards that she liked me from the very first moment. I know that she was a revelation to me, and the love, admiration, and devotion she inspired me with then increased as the years went on. Much to every one's surprise, I was never in the least afraid of her, although I was a timid, nervous girl with strangers. She was very handsome then, with a beautiful figure, always well dressed by an expensive dressmaker in Germany. She had thick, dark brown hair coiled under a dainty lace bow-shaped cap; the style of that cap she never changed to the very end, and for years she always wore those I made. She cared very much for her dress and personal appearance, and she grew more beautiful as she grew older.

"In the year 1876, my father and mother having both died, Mrs. Linton asked me to spend my summer holidays with her in Normandy, and, when these were over, she wrote to my guardians and asked permission to take me with her to Italy for the winter. This was arranged, and we started off, happy and wildly excited. It was here, at the beginning of our life together, that I christened her 'Bones,' which name she loved, saying she loved it better than any other name, and that she felt that, if she were dying and I were to put my arms round her and call her by that name, she would struggle back; which did almost happen years after when she was very ill in Queen Anne's Mansions. She suddenly fainted, and in my terror I clutched her and shrieked 'Bones! Bones!' and she opened her eyes and smiled at me. The name of 'Bones' came from her habit of wearing a large lace bow at her neck, which I, in my impertinent youth, con-

sidered like a Christy minstrel. She laughed; the name stuck, and she always used it herself to me and to one other friend who was on a visit to us. She used to declare that I was the only one who dared to chaff and make fun of her, and that also I was the only one from whom she would stand it.

"The glorious time we had together in Florence, Sienna, Rome, and Naples! We were three years roaming about as mother and daughter. And the interesting people we met! I could fill a stout volume of my own with anecdotes of celebrated people that gathered round Mrs. Linton—Ouida, Sabrini, Madame Ristori and her daughter, Mrs. Sartoris (A. Kemble), the T. A. Trollopes, to whose flat we used to mount those ninety-eight steps with such pleasure each Sunday evening, the W. W. Storys, he of *Roba di Roma* fame, Rogers the sculptor, Miss Hosmer the sculptress, Mrs. Minto Elliot, the Gallingas, and many others.

"Mrs. Linton combined work (she worked without interruption from nine to three), society, and sight-seeing in the most masterly fashion. I have never seen any one who loved work as she did. Her love of order and cleanliness gave her a lot of extra work in those far from immaculate Italian hotel rooms. As a matter of course she used to get up at six in the morning, and give her bedroom a spring-cleaning, as I called it. She would darn in her own dainty way all the holes that she found in the hotel towels, and she would say to me at the dining-table, 'Bee, I wish I dared take this tablecloth or these dinner-napkins up to my room to darn the holes!' Every sign of disorder troubled her, and her patience and loving gentleness with my untidiness touched me more than I can say.[1]

"I remember once in Naples a poor Englishwoman came to her with a tale of woe, of unpaid rent and other troubles. She listened to the story without speaking, then turned and

[1] Mrs. Alec Tweedie, in an interesting article on Mrs. Linton in *Temple Bar*, wrote: "She has always been a great needlewoman, and even now generally sews when she is alone in the evenings. A bundle of table-napkins was lying on the sofa, and I ventured to ask what they were.

"'Only table-napkins. I am darning them as a little help towards keeping the Mansions' linen in order.'

"Fancy an authoress of seventy-two darning table-napkins which are not even her own, for the good housewife's respect for property in general and linen in particular! It is hardly the idea the world has of an authoress. Yet writers are perhaps more human and often more domesticated than other people."

told me to fetch sixty lira out of her box in the next room. She gave the sixty lira quite simply into the poor woman's hands, cutting short her excited thanks with, 'One Englishwoman cannot let another fail in her obligations to an Italian!' Then she wrote immediately and countermanded the new evening-dress she had already ordered. I, in my haphazard way, had in the meanwhile never relocked the box from which I had taken the sixty lira, and some miserable Italian servant walked in and stole the rest of the money out of that box. When this dreadful state of things was discovered, there was never a word of blame for me, she tried only to comfort me in my great distress, saying it was her own fault for sending a heedless lassie on such an errand.

"We went out very much in Rome into all sorts of society, the English and Foreign Embassies, Italian Diplomatic, American and English artistic and literary circles; into the great White (Quirinale) and Black (Papalini) houses. In these Papalini houses, where we met the clerical party, all the ladies had to wear low dresses and short sleeves covered with lace.

"At the end of three years we came back to London in April 1879, intending to return together the next winter to Palermo; but that plan was never carried out, as I was married that winter, and Mrs. Linton returned alone to Rome and then on to Palermo. These next few years were spent by her principally in Italy. When she finally decided to settle in England, it was to our house in Hampstead that she came, and stayed two months, while she and I ransacked London to find a suitable habitation for her. She finally decided on Queen Anne's Mansions, where she lived for eleven years. This pretty flat of hers came to be to me a second home. I was early left a widow, and Mrs. Linton wrapped me and my three young children in her protecting love, fighting for my rights, guarding me from all harm, ever a tower of strength and love to me. She said she felt like a tigress when my rights were assailed, and that she could fight for me when she would not have the courage to fight for herself.

"She was always at home on Saturday, and I always spent the day with her, helping her to receive and to make the tea. My tea-table she used to laughingly call the frivolous

corner of the room, and used to bid her guests go to my end of the room, have tea and be frivolous for five minutes, and then come back to her for serious talk. Those were happy, happy days for all sorts and conditions of people, who used to flock to that pretty drawing-room high up in those monster Mansions, overlooking the Park. The room would be crowded from three to seven.

"Mrs. Linton loved flowers more than any one I have ever met; on her writing-table she always had a bunch of some sweet-smelling flowers. On her Saturdays she filled all her bowls, and made a point of having some very choice blossoms in the large copper bowl that always stood near her place on the sofa. I can see her now, with her face full of sympathy and pleasure, coming forward to welcome her friends. No one ever went to her for sympathy and love and came away unsatisfied.

"The people who used to pour in on those afternoons were oftentimes bewildering in number and identity. Mrs. Linton always remembered faces, but could not always place them, did not remember where she had met them, and if the name had not been clearly announced, she was in an agony of mind until she found out to whom she was speaking. Scarcely a Saturday afternoon passed without her coming across to me and whispering in my ear, 'For heaven's sake, Bee, tell me who these people are!' Very often I knew; sometimes I did not, and would have to go out of the room, find the servant or the visiting cards, and then scribble a little note in pencil and have it sent in to Mrs. Linton with 'Answer wanted' on the outside, so that it must be opened at once, and inside, the much-desired name. I always kept paper and pencil ready for these little episodes. But then, of course, we had the *habitués*, who were the backbone of these pleasant Saturdays. Mrs. Linton counted among her numerous friends and acquaintances Mr. and Mrs. Oswald Crawfurd, Mr. and Mrs. J. K. Jerome, Mr. and Mrs. Rider Haggard, Sir William and Lady Crookes, Marie Corelli, Eric Mackay, William Watson, Henry Savage Landor, Edward Clodd, Mrs. Sutherland Orr, Beatrice Harraden, Mrs. Alexander and her daughters, Sir Harry Johnston, Mr. du Chaillu, Hamilton Aidé, Madame Novikoff, Frank Harris, Sir William and Lady Priestley, Mr. and Mrs. Moberly Bell, Dr. Beattie Crozier, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Lang, Professor Herkomer,

Rudyard Kipling, Anthony Hope, Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Ellen Terry, Charles Wyndham, Geneviève Ward, Beatrice Lamb, H. D. Traill, Swinburne, Theodore Watts-Dunton, Mr. and Mrs. Linley Sambourne, Stacey Marks, Mr. Lilly, George Grossmith, Sir George and Lady Lewis, and many others.

"In these years at Queen Anne's Mansions Mrs. Linton went out immensely and gave delightful dinners, where there were gathered together all that was best and brightest in London society.

"As years went on she longed to get away from all the hurry and exhausting life in London, and finally decided to take a house in Malvern."

CHAPTER XVI

1877–1879

THE following masterly character-sketch of Mrs. Lynn Linton, for which I am indebted to Mr. A. W. Benn, the author of *The Greek Philosophers* and *The Philosophy of Greece*, may fittingly be inserted here.

"I first met Mrs. Lynn Linton about the beginning of February 1877, in Rome. Years before this, I had formed a very favourable idea of her personality from the courage and eloquence with which she gave expression to advanced or unpopular opinions; and this impression was deepened by her conversation. I must confess, indeed, that in appearance Mrs. Linton did not at all agree with the fancy picture that I had formed of the author of *Joshua Davidson*. I looked for something concentrated, austere, unworldly; and found, to my surprise, that this free-thinking Communist had apparently taken for her model the most comfortable and complacent type of British matron. One of her first observations was that she set her face against slang, but that sometimes one could not express one's meaning without using a slang word. I shall therefore make no apology for saying that the lady struck me as being decidedly 'jolly.' But nobody of any intelligence could talk to Mrs. Linton for half an hour without discovering that the enthusiasm which forms so dominant a characteristic in her writings was no less an essential element of her individuality, where, however, it co-existed with a sense of humour somewhat wanting in her literary compositions. Another conspicuous trait, especially piquant in one who first won celebrity as the most caustic of Saturday Reviewers, was a vein of childlike innocence, of which she was herself perfectly conscious, and,

indeed, rather proud. Sometimes, though very rarely, this innocence showed itself in print. In an article on Venice describing Bonifazio's terrible picture of Dives and Lazarus, she called attention to the sweet faces of two ladies who are sitting with the sick man, and whom she supposed to be his wife and sister-in-law. They are, in fact, Venetian courtesans; and as it rather provoked me to find that Mrs. Linton held up such persons as examples of feminine purity to our modern English girls, I informed her, not without some satisfaction, of her mistake. She at once accepted my more cynical view of the situation, but was simply delighted with herself for not having suspected the truth.

"We were already friends of some years' standing when this incident occurred. But from the very beginning of our acquaintance Mrs. Linton was singularly amenable to correction—so far, at least, as matters of fact and questions of style were concerned. In this respect she had changed in a direction the reverse of that followed by most writers, whose self-confidence usually increases as they grow older. 'When I was young,' she said to me, 'criticism would have thrown me into hysterics; I welcome it now.'

"Like many self-taught persons, she exaggerated the importance of systematic training, and considered that she might have done much better if she had had the advantage of a more regular education. It might have made her more discriminating in the choice of those on whom her admiration and confidence were lavished: but as a conversationalist I think she would have lost rather than gained by passing through such a discipline as that to which the most promising girls are now subjected. Mrs. Linton was a charming talker, ranging without effort over an immense variety of topics, as well as, what all good talkers are not, a good listener, always ready to receive information from others where her own was incomplete, and to hear what could be said for opinions that she did not share. Her voice, which seems to have been carefully cultivated, was rich, sweet, and well modulated; and she listened with an air of rapt attention, probably cultivated also, but at any rate very flattering to the speaker on whom it was bestowed. As was to be expected with one

so fascinating, many people had made her the confidante of their troubles, schemes, and adventures; indeed, her knowledge of human nature was perhaps derived more from such communications than from direct experience of life. Her memory was excellent, and she told stories admirably—better, I thought, in conversation than in print, because then the narrative did not suffer from the diffuseness and the mannerism of her literary style. Personal gossip as such did not greatly interest her; she valued the incidents of life in so far as they served to illustrate or to suggest some general idea. Of course I am only relating my own individual impressions; and it may be that in this respect Mrs. Linton was more or less consciously adapting herself to what she knew was an all-absorbing passion with myself;[1] but whatever motive may have called it out, the aptitude for ideas was there. For philosophy in the abstract, for metaphysics, she had neither talent nor taste, nor indeed for subtleties of any kind; the convolutions of her brain, she said, were like cart-ropes. But concrete philosophy, the direct application of theory to life, she found irresistibly attractive.

"It will not surprise any one who knows anything about this lady, to hear that in her company all such discussions sooner or later, and sooner rather than later, led up to the Woman Question, or rather to what is now known under the more general name of the Sex Problem.

"Whatever Mrs. Linton may have been or tried to be in her youth, when I knew her she was feminine to the finger-tips; but she evidently thought that what was good enough for her was good enough for her sisters; and the necessity of keeping them within the limits of their sex, and of drawing those limits somewhat closely, had become a fixed idea, a fanaticism to whose service all the resources of her picturesque and

[1] That Mrs. Linton did not merely adapt herself to Mr. Benn's taste, but was actuated by principle, is undoubted. She was for ever at war with mere personal tittle-tattle, and held with Pascal that "if everybody knew what one says of the other, there would not be four friends left in the world." Soon after settling in Malvern she told my wife, with evident dismay, that she found herself in danger of being drawn into the gossip of the place, and she was for ever saying, "Don't let us talk about our neighbours."—G. S. L.

passionate rhetoric were devoted. In truth, the relations of the sexes interested her above all other phenomena of life, and she feared that the romantic complications to which they give rise would disappear if the characters of men and women were assimilated, or if they were arrayed against one another in two hostile camps. It was a favourite notion of hers that the distinction of sex extended to whole nations: England, Germany, and Spain were masculine; France and Italy feminine; and I well remember her gratification at finding Sweden spoken of as 'the lady of the Scandinavian family.'

"At the same time it must be mentioned that in her private conversation at least Mrs. Linton supported some important items in the programme of feminine emancipation. She thought that the rights of mothers to the guardianship of their own children ought to be considerably extended, and she advocated a greatly increased facility of divorce expressly in the interest of married women, her argument being that in the United States applications for divorce come much more frequently from the wife than from the husband. I believe she would have made marriage dissoluble at the pleasure of either party; and at the very least she would have granted a divorce in every instance where a judicial separation can now be obtained. I may add that, while not sparing in sarcasms at the expense of her sex, she would not tolerate them from others even when they could not by any possibility be applied to herself; and she could not forgive Froude the historian for his real or supposed hostility to women.

"This great opponent of female suffrage was herself an ardent politician, and held very decided opinions on every public issue. A devoted Liberal, her attachment was rather to the Liberal party—for which she told me she would give her life—than to the principles it was supposed to represent. More than once in conversation she has been heard to say that the Roman Catholic Church ought, if possible, to be put down by main force; and her sympathy with oppressed nationalities was bounded to the East by the Adriatic. At any rate she expressed much surprise at the conduct of the

English Liberals in supporting Russia during the war of 1877–78. On my referring to the precedent of 1859, when they similarly supported the detested French emperor in his campaign for the liberation of Italy, she replied that all good Liberals would have supported the devil himself in such a cause. 'Then why not Russia now?' said I. 'Well,' she retorted, 'it is very like calling in the devil.' Italy was indeed one of her greatest enthusiasms, and long residence among the Italians rather increased than diminished the feeling that she brought with her from England. Nobody could be more keenly sensible to the faults of the Italian character than she was; but the ingenuousness, spontaneity, and ardour of the people, above all the pitch to which she believed that they could carry the passion of love, appealed to her irresistibly both as an artist and as a woman. Like the modern Italians, too, she was all for industrial progress, even when introduced at the expense of picturesque antiquities; and I feel sure that her signature would not have been given to the protest against the destruction of old Florence which caused so much excitement in æsthetic circles last winter.[1]

"When I first knew Mrs. Linton, she was a professed Communist; nor am I aware that she had ceased to be such when I saw her for the last time in 1886. But her opinions on this subject seemed rather the result of temperament and accidental association than of natural conviction. 'I have not been Mr. Linton's wife for nothing,' she once exclaimed; and the influence of the foreign refugees to whom her husband introduced her, very powerful during her married life, probably became fainter as the years passed by and the counter-attractions of London society came into play. But the decisive factor was, I think, something stronger than any merely personal or social influences. Whatever disparaging remarks Mrs. Linton might utter about her countrywomen and even about her countrymen, she was at heart a passionate English patriot of the old type, very easily persuaded that the cause of England was the cause of justice and progress. And when the aims of the Liberal party or of any other party

[1] This was written in 1899.

seemed to conflict with the national interests, it could not be doubtful on which side her choice would lie. I have said that she could not understand the pro-Russian attitude of the Liberal leaders during the crisis of 1878. Still less could she agree with those who thought the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan an unjustifiable aggression. 'Has not our Embassy been insulted?' was her simple reply to all expostulations. And although her sympathy with the agrarian movement in Ireland had been intense, after some hesitation she threw in her lot with the Liberal Unionists in 1886. In her last conversation with me she appealed indeed to the authority of such old and trusted leaders as John Bright as a reason for rejecting Home Rule. But I cannot help thinking that anxiety for the integrity and strength of the empire was what really determined her allegiance. At any rate, her latest contributions to the press exhibit her in the character of an ardent Imperialist, and in the face of such an immediate interest all communistic dreams must have been either abandoned or relegated to a dim and distant future.

"Mrs. Linton often talked to me about religion, and in a remarkably trenchant manner; but I have little to say on this subject, as her conversation added nothing to what all the world may read in *Joshua Davidson* and *Under which Lord*. She did me the honour to submit the proof-sheets of the latter work to my revision; but the very small amount of philosophy introduced did not seem to call for any criticism, and my share in the preparation of the work was limited to suggesting a few verbal emendations, all of which were, to the best of my recollection, accepted with a profusion of acknowledgment far in excess of the service rendered. This gifted lady professed Agnosticism with complete sincerity, and at one time, I believe, to the extent of sacrificing her dearest affections on its altar; but it was a creed that contrasted rather oddly with her credulous nature. Her optimism, too, seemed more like the survival of a discarded creed or the suggestion of a sanguine temperament than a legitimate inference from the facts of modern science. No argument could shake her old-fashioned belief

that everything in nature existed for the use of man; or rather it was a dogma that she would not allow any argument to approach, any more than she could be brought to see that female suffrage was merely a particular application of the democratic principles that she proclaimed.

"In the spring of 1879 I saw Mrs. Linton every day for three weeks at Mentone; and in the summer of the following year I spent nearly two months with her at Bex and in the Engadine. She was at that time still a fairly good walker, sometimes doing ten miles at a stretch, enjoyed fine scenery, and botanised with the ardour that she threw into all her pursuits. In the subsequent autumn we met frequently at Florence, where she introduced me to the young lady who at that period had already won a great literary reputation under the name of Vernon Lee, and to her brother the poet, Eugene Lee-Hamilton—an introduction to which I owe one of the most valued friendships of my life. I mention this because it was eminently characteristic of Mrs. Linton that she should like her friends to know and appreciate one another. After that we only met on the rare occasions when she passed through Florence or when I visited London. As I have already mentioned, our last interview was in June 1886. On this occasion her intellectual vitality, and what with many is more perishable, her interest in the affairs of her friends, seemed as vivid as when I first knew her; nor would it surprise me to hear that they continued in equal freshness to the end."

Mrs. Linton's views on the necessity of systematic training in the conduct of life are set forth in the following extract from a letter written to Mr. Benn in 1881:—

"The more I see, the more I feel the need for scientific training for common sense even in life. People think that wish is will, and that a strong wish is the same as that kind of will which works with and by its surroundings, which seizes opportunities and is not diverted by side issues—which is as clear as to means as it is in desires. Scientific training and being accustomed to look to causes for results and means for attaining ends is the only true enlightener—the only solid basis for the pyramid of life."

In the same strain she wrote to Mr. Herbert Spencer a few years later—

"... I wish I had the brain and the time and the memory to make good and vital use of your works! My admiration for a philosophic mind is in proportion to my own want of philosophy, to my own deficiency all round in the way of education. But my powerful and tenacious memory of old days is becoming mud, not granite, and lets the impressions of things efface themselves. Altogether I have come into a phase of supreme self-dissatisfaction and consciousness of failure, not success. . . .

"I was so glad to see you again! If I in early life had had such a friend, I might have done something with myself; but I have *always* been among conventional or unlearned people, I have never been in the higher circles of thought and knowledge."

The story of Mrs. Linton's life during the years 1877 and 1878 must be mainly gathered from letters. From 15th January until 15th April she was settled in Rome, living in the Hotel du Sud, *viâ* Capo le Case, "with a room as big as a barn, and one only a shade smaller for" Miss Sichel. On the day after their arrival she writes to her nieces Lizzie and Ada Gedge—

"I have seen some of the old part of Rome to-day, and I cried as if I had been standing by the grave of one I loved. It overcame me, dears, and I was quite low. If a young man whom we know had not been there I should have cried plentiful. As it was, I just loot down some tears and sniffed the rest up. But I was really overcome. It was the realisation of a life. Those grand old ruins where the heroes of old time walked and talked and suffered and died. The air was full of spectres; and when I realised Cicero and Cæsar and the gladiators in the Coliseum there, and the poor Christians cast to the lions, *Christiani ad Leones* thundered out by the roar of a thousand voices, and the poor doomed gladiators going to death walking up to the Imperial throne with their mournful but brave *Ave Cæsar, morituri te salutant*, I lived for the moment so entirely in the time and scene that the present seemed to go and the past only to remain."

And on the 20th—

"I am waiting in all impatience for the springtime and the flowers. I want to see the Italian flora, and am quite looking forward to it. It is not always easy to get the flowers; they build such high walls round the vineyards that one cannot see anything, still less find anything."

All through her life this passion for flowers was with her. At the time of her marriage Landor had written to her—

"Try to get a little bit of garden. My mother and sister were very fond and not a little proud of theirs. I often talked to the flowers without knowing their names—neither did they know my ignorance of them, or they would never smile at me as they did."

And though it was only during the last few years of her life that the possession of "a little bit of garden" became practicable, she never lost an opportunity of adding to her botanical knowledge. Her letters teem with allusions. In 1874 she writes, "I have the primrose hunger on me very strongly." In 1881 she wrote to Mrs. Gedge, "I think I shall go back to the Engadine or to the Dolomites this summer. It is a long journey back to England, and I want to do some botanising. The flowers there are so fine. Things grow in the Engadine which grow nowhere else, and my visit last summer was a disappointment in more ways than one; and if I can find any one who understands flowers thoroughly, I would go where he or she might be. There is a charming clergyman whom I met at Cadenabbia, a Mr. Heathcote, who is a beautiful botanist. He is wanting to make a book of wild flowers in the Engadine, drawn and described by himself. . . . He is going back this summer, and if I can find where he will be, and I can—I shall go to the same place. He said he would be glad if I did, for I understood a little too about flowers—but not so well as he does."

Again the same year she complains—

"Italy is not a good place for wild flowers. There are so few waste bits. Every place is cultivated. Every little *ledge* has its vines or potatoes or bits of maize or corn, and the waste ground where flowers grow is conspicuous by its absence. The Favorita or royal gardens in Palermo were

the best 'hunting grounds' I have seen in Italy. Here (Castellamare) there is nothing, excepting a kind of Solomon's seal and a beautiful large flax, and that cottage flower (love in a mist)—the nigella. The myrtles have flowered or have no flowers here, for I have come upon bushes which had not a bud nor blossom."

Again from the same place—

"The paths and roads are ankle-deep in dust, and there is not a flower to be seen—perhaps occasionally one comes upon one campanula or a labiate, but no flowers of any kind are to be had now. I buy them to be broken-hearted. They last a day!"

In 1882 she wrote to Mr. Benn with Landor-like vehemence—

"Do you know what the 'lily of the valley orchid' is? I am worried nearly into the gaping doors of a lunatic asylum by people talking to me of the lily of the valley orchid found in abundance in the Riviera. I never heard that name for any orchid, and no one knows any other."

In 1884 she wrote—

"I remember when I first noted the different shapes of certain buds of trees, *e.g.* the difference between those of the horse-chestnut and the lime; I can yet put back certain rose-bushes and honeysuckles found in the hedges; and if it still exists as a field, I could walk straight to that corner of the field where I once found what I suppose must have been an oxlip. But it is more than fifty years since I have seen the place.

"I remember the smell of the laurestinus and the bay trees the first evening we arrived at my father's Kentish home; and the kind of awe with which those two cedars in the shrubbery opposite inspired me."

In 1898 to Mr. Oakley—

"Tell (your sister) I have a *boronia*, the sweetest and most entrancing little flower that could be. It is all full of spice and wholesome fragrance. It makes you think of the spice breezes we read of, gives no headaches, does not cloy, does not oppress and poison while it stupefies the senses, but is penetrating, wholesome, fragrant, altogether delightful. This

little flower is very, very pretty, though inconspicuous, and I feel grateful to the dear sister for all the enjoyment I have had out of it."

To Mr. Towndrow, the well-known Malvern botanist, within a year of her death—

"I cannot botanise now, for I cannot walk nor stoop nor see, but I am like the old war-horse of Job when I get the chance of a new wild flower! . . . Once in a waste kind of side road near Bakewell in Derbyshire, where no carts nor people seemed to pass, I found the most beautiful hawkweed. It was all covered with fine hairs, and each hair was tipped with a little globule of golden sticky stuff. Was that a mere chance or was it a variety? I have also found the deep orange hawkweed in Wales, near Llandago. It is common enough abroad in the Engadine, but I never found it but once in England."

And again in early spring of the same year—

"The rose trees which had put out their young leaves like impudent little varlets without reverence or modesty, have had their green ears boxed (by the late frost), and have subsided into very melancholy penitence!"

In Rome she was a welcome guest at the Embassy, where Lady Paget then reigned. This lady writes to me—

"I used to see her often in Rome, and liked her much. Her indomitable courage and her *straightness* in everything would ensure the liking and respect of anybody who knew her well, and her wit and sense of humour were ever delightful."

Mrs. Linton was now at work on her new serial, *The World Well Lost*, and wrote, "I am very glad you like my new story. It is quiet and simple, and miles inferior to *Leam*. I do not know why people do not like *Leam*. It is my best bit of work."

The World Well Lost was an enlarged version of a short story, entitled *For Love*, which had appeared in the *Queen*. This last was republished in a volume of stories—*With a Silken Thread, etc.* (Chatto & Windus)—in 1880. In conception it is greatly inferior to *Leam Dundas*, but in certainty of touch and style it is second to none of its predecessors. Like most of Mrs. Linton's novels, it is, I am bound to say,

only interesting now to those who care to study the development of the English novel, and I shall not overload these pages with retrospective reviews which none would wish to read.

By the middle of April Mrs. Linton and Miss Sichel had moved on to Naples, where they spent ten days working and sight-seeing. Thence on to Vico Equense, where they were lodged in an old palace. This was furnished worse than an English peasant's cottage, and the servants consisted of a boy-cook, eighteen years of age, a little girl, and a child. "Luigi is a pretty boy and a good cook, but we ought to dine at half-past six, and we dine at a quarter-past seven, because Luigi has been taking a lesson on the guitar from an old ragged brigand up from the mountain, or playing at bowls in the public street. Hitherto it has been dead cold, and the cold of a comfortless old barrack like this is dreadful. To-day it is the loveliest summer day of June. The scents of orange blossom and acacia come up, and the view is the most divine thing you can imagine. From one window we look over the town on to the bay and to the islands of Ischia and Procida. At another, the north window of my room, we see Vesuvius and Naples. The little town of Vico Equense goes in steps, and is the most picturesque thing to look at possible. When you are in it, it is the dirtiest. The streets are just wide enough to let a carriage or cart pass without touching you if you squeeze flat up against the wall. In the piazza, where there are fountains, there is a stand of donkey-carriages, etc., and we are almost mobbed when we go through. The children follow us in troops, begging. Every one begs—men, women, and children, all are filthy in person, and in rags. Yesterday Bee and I went for a walk up the mountain side. The road is made in steps, that a mule could get up, but not a carriage. We went a long way, till we came to a gang of men making a road, and they looked such cut-throats—I daresay they were very douce, mild, good fellows—that I got frightened and turned back. . . . But I am a fool, nothing would happen."

From here they moved on to Capri, and then back to Vico Equense at the end of June. All this time she was working hard at her novel, writing a story for the *New Quarterly* and

producing her weekly articles for the *Queen* and the *Saturday Review*, besides taking lessons in Italian. "Three times a week," she writes, "we drive two and a half miles to some baths—or rather bathing-machines—which are in a part of the sea where there is a sulphur spring, and I am learning to swim, and this is the sole and only pleasure of our lives."

At this time she was seriously thinking of settling in Italy. "I love the language so much, and the winter and spring climate, and then I could go to England, as every one does, every summer. If I did arrange to do this, I would fix myself in Rome. . . . My extreme opinions, political and religious, would tell against me in a smaller and foreign society, and I am as little likely to change as to keep silent when called on to speak."

In October they moved on to Naples, whence she writes on 10th November—

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"HOTEL NOBILE, NAPOLI.

"I have been *very* ill for a week, but am all right now—was as if poisoned with something. . . . Then my Bee and I went over to the island of Ischia, which is *mountaineous* (*sic*), and where we lived in the purest and loveliest air, and I got quite well and came back jolly. . . . But I am thin all over, with a small face and quite withered hands. I am going to be thin and I am getting quite grey, and my 'abundant hair,' Lucy, has fallen off till it is thin hair and no longer abundant. And all in all I am a wretch. . . . I am not *very* strong these later days, but never other than cheerful and perfectly resigned to all that comes. I see the realities of life as facts and not to be sorrowful for. There they are and we have to make the best of them! It is of no use kicking against the pricks, and all the inevitable circumstances of life—as death and old age—we must accept cheerfully. The remediable misfortunes are another matter. These I would strive against to the utmost, but for the rest!—they are painful, Heaven knows, but how can we help them? For sickness and incompetence, these are remediable with more knowledge, and the world is growing better, and will one day be, if not perfect, indefinitely improved."

And on the 18th—

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"HOTEL NOBILE, NAPLES.

"I have been up Vesuvius—walked the whole way, and nearly died! We went on a bad day, and got into the smoke. We were nearly suffocated. It was all sulphur, and I was sea-sick. The guide wiped my mouth and then my face with his filthy pocket-handkerchief, and I was so humiliated by suffering that I was grateful! I would not be carried, and so I suffered. And when we got to the top it was all smoke! We could not see into the crater one bit—no more than looking into a white plate, only the white moved! It was awful. The way is one mass of loose cinders or ashes, where you sink in to your calf (coming down) and over your ankles going up. Every step up you slide half-way back. I had two men to pull me with ropes round them and through a stick that then I held, and a man to push. It is almost at times perpendicular. I had to stop 'ferma!' 'aspetta!' every six or seven steps at least, and fling myself on the ground face downward, and I almost died! But it is done, and was a sell all throughout!"

On the first of December they arrived in Rome.

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"HOTEL DU LOUVRE, ROME,
12th January 1878.

"I am very glad that you liked my new book. I do not care for it so much myself as *Leam Dundas*, but I expect it will be a great deal more popular. As for the spiritualism, dearie, I do not believe in it as anything beyond whatever hysteria may mean. All the so-called manifestations of hands, etc., when seen by many, *are without exception frauds*—when seen by one only, are hallucinations. It is a thing that does not bear the light of day or of reason. Look at it—if a force is so powerful as to move a heavy table and so material as to be able to make tangible hands—where do you stop?

"The jargon that is talked of the spirits being able to materialise themselves only through the presence and outflow

of a certain medium, is all nonsense, and is taken for what it is worth by every scientific mind. That there is a certain uncatalogued force in man, whether we call it spiritualism or hysteria, ecstasy—anything you like, I do not doubt for a moment, but it has nothing to do with unseen powers extra to himself. And as for allowing a child of mine to practise it, I would as soon give him or her such poison as I knew would lead to madness. Hundreds of people have gone mad over it, and the tendency to fraud becomes irresistible. I have seen so much of it. . . . I have seen nearly every medium of note, and I have been again and again at séances, and at every one I have detected manifest imposture. Every person who has calmly examined it has done the same, and every medium that I have ever talked to laughs at the pretensions of the others. . . .

"There is something underneath not yet accepted as a human faculty, but it is only human—it is not supernatural or what we mean by spiritual. . . .

"All the city is in mourning and consternation at the death of the poor king.[1] It has been a dreadful blow to every one, and the state of every one on Wednesday was really pitiable. It struck me to my heart, and I was as cold and white as this paper for hours after.

"It is a dreadful thing for Italy at this moment. Things are not sufficiently consolidated to bear a shock of any kind, and this is a shock; and unless Humbert I. is wise and moderate, on all sides there will be grave troubles!"

E. L. L. to Mrs. Gedge.

"Hotel du Louvre, Rome,
5th March 1878.

"Our youth has gone, beloved, and we have to face the unpleasant fact of *decadence*. But much power of enjoyment in this life is still left to us, and we can live in nature and the love of our kind, and take interest in the great questions of the day, which after all are greater things than the mere physical pleasures of youth. . . . We will some day have our Keswick trip together. It would be a *great* pleasure to me, quite as great as to you. I should like to go over the old roads with you, and go back to the house where we were

[1] Victor Emmanuel.

so young and so bored! We were not happy then, sweetheart. Life was frightfully dull to us, and wholly without colour or interest. Don't you remember how we flew to the Sunday school and Bible classes for interest?"

On 2nd May she writes—

"ROME.

"True success comes only by hard work, great courage in self-correction, and the most earnest and intense determination to succeed, not thinking that every endeavour is already success. I have so very much to do with advising young writers; scarcely a week passes without my receiving letters, and I can judge at once whether there is the true stuff in a person or not, by their willingness to see their own shortcomings and their wish to do well rather than to have praise. It is the whole difference between playing at work and *real* work."

"Rome in 1877," in the *Queen* for 28th April, was one outcome of their stay, and one more proof that as a journalist it would be hard to find her superior. As one glances here and there at a few of the thousands of articles which she reeled off week by week, one is astonished at the freshness and ebullience of her pen. She is never mechanical in her work; her vital resources are ready to hand on all occasions. She is rarely dull. Her mind is always "letting off its overcharge," not pumping up out of the dregs. She never forgets that she is "writing for the hour, and not for posterity." When she is composing her weekly articles for the *Saturday*, the *Queen*, or the *St. James's Budget*, she knows better than to fall into the error of using the heavier literary treatment which is demanded by the monthly magazine. And when she is writing for the *New Quarterly* or the *British Review*, she throws her toga around her in proper style, and writes with all the gravity that the occasion demands.

In a word, she was great as a journalist, and in journalism is found her highest achievement.

And this is where I think Mrs. Linton's literary reputation has suffered. It has been the fashion to regard her primarily as a novelist, whereas her novel-writing, remarkable as it was,

was but a side issue, and subordinate. With the great actor who has temporarily turned playwright, she runs the risk of being judged by what has taken more permanent form to the ignoring of what she has done of chiefest value, but which was in its nature evanescent.

From Rome Mrs. Linton moved on to Zenbach in the Austrian Tyrol, thence to Hennequeville, near Trouville, thence to Munich and back to Scholastica near Zenbach. By September she was in Venice. All this time she was hard at work at her new novel, which was to start serially in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for January 1879. The first title chosen was *Under which King*, eventually changed to *Under which Lord.*

In November she was back in Florence, whence she writes that her new book is "going to make a noise, but *you* (Mrs. Gedge) will not like it. No orthodox person will. I cannot help that! I must write according to my conscience, and I must take the blame and bear the brunt when it comes in consequence." They were lodged in "the Palace (4 Via del Corso) where they say Dante first saw Beatrice as a little girl, and they show the place in the courtyard where she stood and the garden where she was."

In December they were back in Rome, where they stayed till March 1879. It was here that she heard of the serious illness of Professor W. K. Clifford, and wrote—

E. L. L. to Mrs. W. K. Clifford.

"It is not saying more than I feel when I say that willingly —willingly would I give my life for his! His illness is a daily grief to me. There is not a day in which I do not think of him and you, and grieve over the hardness of this trial to him and you and us all. Such a man as that was meant for the service and advancement of humanity, and I feel as if life and the world were so much the poorer for want of his full activity. I do hope that Madeira has been of service to him. Oh, if he could but get back to health and strength! My darling! if he could! In writing to you I seem to have nothing to say but love, and grief for him."[1]

[1] Professor Clifford died on the 4th March 1879.

In her next letter to the same lady she says, "I am working hard on my book [*Under which Lord*], which is not weak —whether artistically good is another matter. If it is, I think the book will be a great success; if not, it will be a dead failure, and all the more from its audacity."

This, probably the best known and now most widely read of all her novels, was a daring departure, and further scandalised those to whom *Joshua Davidson* had been anathema. Remonstrance and abuse were showered upon the devoted editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, in which it ran serially, for allowing his pages to be sullied with the proceedings of the villainous Ritualistic parson. The clergyman as rascal was new to fiction in those days, and the few who found the cap fitted were quickly up in arms and made a terrible pother.

Others, however, were grateful for the book, and letters of congratulation and thanks poured in from many quarters.

The following from one who, as a writer of fiction himself, was soon to set all the world talking, may be quoted as a sample:—

F. FARGUS (HUGH CONWAY) TO E. L. L.

"13 OAKFIELD ROAD, CLIFTON, BRISTOL,
3rd December 1879.

"MADAM,—I should commence this letter with an apology for writing it, did I not feel that, had I given the world a novel of the same description as *Under which Lord*, a letter, even from a stranger, thanking me for it, would not be considered intrusive. You must not fancy I am exaggerating when I say your work has given me more pleasure than anything I have seen for years, and I can see in the publication of such a work, and in the popularity which awaits it, a great step, if not towards the knowledge of truth, at least towards the destruction of illogical creed.

"Nothing, madam, would have pleased me better than to have told you how the different types of character struck me; but from a stranger this would be presumption, so I can only thank you and congratulate you. I am sure our pastors can have no idea of the spread of what they are pleased to call infidelity in England, especially amongst the upper middle class of young men. I have many friends, and find, with

scarcely an exception, those intellectually worth their salt are agnostics, at heart if not professedly.

"I fear my name will be quite unknown to you, but, having recently published a small volume of poems, several of which touch on the subjects I have discussed above, I should feel pleased to know a copy was in your hands, and if you care to accept it, would upon hearing from you forward one.—I remain, madam, yours obediently, HUGH CONWAY."

By the end of May Mrs. Linton had returned to London, and writes from Hayter House—

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"*28th May* 1879.

"I went over the largest hospital in England last night. It was such a strange sensation being there at night, with all the wards quiet, the lights turned down, many sleeping, many awake, feverish and restless. There was one poor fellow, a butcher, who had nearly killed himself unintentionally by a missed blow of an axe, which did not chop the meat, and did cut his own stomach. He was getting on, but first they thought he would not live. A baby three months old had a broken thigh. One man, with awful abscesses on his legs, had hundreds of small bits of healthy flesh taken from the rest of his body to engraft into the sore places. It was all very interesting. I went with Mrs. Priestley,[1] and we were received and carried round by the governor and one of the young doctors. I am to write a magazine article about it. We did not get home till twelve."

After visits to the Priestleys in Scotland and the Gedges at Ludborough Rectory, Lincolnshire, September found her back in London.

On 15th November she wrote to her nephew—

E. L. L. TO MR. ERNEST GEDGE.

"There is one thing you must hold fast by — Duty. That includes self-respect and ambition. Do what is right and don't do what is wrong, for the sake of the good for

[1] Now Lady Priestley.

which we ought all to live, and for that self-respect which we ought never to outrage.

"And remember that what you have got to do in life is to succeed—not only to enjoy yourself, but work well and bravely and manfully to the end. . . . If you want a safe and understanding friend with whom to take counsel, come to me.—Your loving aunt and true friend,

"ELIZA LYNN LINTON."

Although Mrs. Linton was now home again, she was not settled. For one thing, the Sunny South was calling her imperiously. With Walter Pater, she held that the hot southern sun has in itself some ineffable and secret effect on the nerve centres and makes one inclined to be pleased.

"I pine for Italy," she wrote to Madame Villari in October of this year, "for the language which I cannot speak, the beauty and gallantry and love of the men which I do not share, the sky that I do not go out enough to enjoy, the sun that I have to pull down my blind to keep out of my eyes. But the spell has been laid on me, and I feel as if I should die if I could not go back. I will try and let these rooms for a year from next May, and then go back to the Continent. I want to go south to see Capri again, and to have another winter in Rome. Why I love it all so passionately I cannot tell, but it is like a human creature into whose eyes I want to look once more, and whose voice I yearn to hear."

Besides this she needed distraction. The loss this year of her young friend and companion, Miss Sichel, by her marriage, was a heavy blow, and she found the loneliness of London lodgings at present out of the question. I shall give her own account of her feelings at this crisis. Those who are cold-blooded and philosophic will no doubt find her emotion strained and exaggerated. Those, however, who were her friends, will know that her outpourings were as genuine as they were vehement.

"I tried hard to be grateful for what had been, and not to sour the past by lamentations in the present; to be cheerful, and to take an active interest in things and people as I had done when my heart was at rest and I was happy

in my home. But human nature was too strong for me; and I had again the old conflict to go through—again to fight with my wild beasts of sorrow and disappointment and loss, till I had conquered them—unless I would be conquered by them.

"The time was very dreary, very sad. I thought that all love had died out for the rest of the years I had to live. I promised myself I would have no more enthusiasms, make no more close friendships, open my inner heart to no ideal for the future;—never again! never again! Love had ever brought me pain in excess of joy; and henceforward I would live on the broad common-land of friendships that were kindly, refreshing, sustaining, but not exclusive to me; friendships where I was one among others, and where I made numbers stand instead of specialities. I would have no more private gardens cultivated with my heart's blood, to see them laid waste by disappointment, separation, death.

"What supreme folly it was to put one's happiness into the power of others—to hang one's peace like a jewel round another's neck! The wise man keeps his own possessions sure. It is only lunatics who scatter their treasures far and wide among those who, by the law of their own life, cannot guard them. And what was I but a lunatic, with this insatiable need of loving—this inexhaustible power of giving? Why had I ever let this dear child creep so far into my heart, so that when the appointed end of a girl such as she came, as come it must, I should suffer as I did? For indeed her loss was quite as severe a trial to me as the break-up of my married life had been, when I had had to begin again the struggle proper to youth, without the hope, the energy, the unworn nerves of youth, and further handicapped by the sense of disappointment and illusion. Truly I was an unlucky investor of affection!—but the strange law of loss —the strange ruling of fate that I should not root—had never pressed so hardly on me as now. For long months I was spiritually sick, so that sometimes I despaired of my own recovery.

"By degrees, however, the old recuperative force made itself felt, and my vigorous vitality reasserted itself. I re-

covered my moral tone. My power of hope and love came back to me, and life was not over for me. Struck down again and again as I had been, I was not conquered; and I should continue the fight till yet later in the evening. The sun was westering rapidly, but daylight still remained. The present had its flowers, the future might bear its fruits; and neither I nor nature was exhausted. My wounds healed as they had healed before, and I seemed to wake as from sleep and to bestir myself after. It was impossible for me to live this self-centred kind of existence—this retracted, mutilated moral life, and not put out my feelers for that touch of my kind which is to my soul what breath is to my body."

The following brave and kindly letter to her adopted daughter shows that she did not allow the sense of her own loss to intrude itself upon the innocent cause.

E. L. L. TO MRS. HARTLEY.

"HAYTER HOUSE, 238 MARYLEBONE ROAD,
9th March 1880.

"MY BELOVED BEE,—I cannot tell you what supreme joy your letter has given me. 'Peace and rest'—those two words, darling, are worth a volume. That is *the* feeling to have! You are at peace now, you have rest. You have your friend, your protector, your lover, your caretaker, your home in your dear husband's arms for life. And all that you have got to do is to be your own sweet, best, truest self, to love him, to study him, to give to him all that he gives to you—and that is no task, no difficulty! It is all done with; your home is secured, your happiness, and no one now has the right to bring a moment's sorrow to your dear heart. Oh, Bee, how glad I am that it has all turned out so well! For that engagement time was trying, and if you had both got fretful and irritable even with each other, I should not have been surprised. However, it is all over. Every care and sorrow lies behind you, and we have only joy and love, rest and peace, in the present and the future. I could let myself cry for very joy that you are so happy and so safe!—I kiss your dear soft eyes as I used, like my own little bimb, and I kiss my dear son's good face in *gratitude* and love through and for you.

"The weather has been slightly less disgusting since you left, but I cannot reconcile myself to London, and I am in one of my blank, black moods when life seems to me empty of all but tracasseries. I take things too much to heart, Bee! and get so deeply wounded by people who mean nothing offensive. I have had a fortnight's inner trouble over something that pained me, and I cannot shake it off. It is like sunshine to turn my mind to you and Lion in your young happiness and brightness, in the dear warm sunlight of Love and all the first blush of your springtime. It makes me happy to think of you—and if I have not let my rooms by then how glad I shall be to see you return! I think I shall go to the station to meet you if I knew when you would come. You are so like my own child, Bee! I have never taken to a girl as I have to you. No one of your own age ever came so near to me. I never loved like *my own* child any girl as I love you.

"Well, this letter is more a mere embrace than a piece of news. My best love goes with you both.

"God bless you, my dear, dear child! Keep well and come back looking *supreme!* My Bee's and my dear son Lion's loving mother, E. LYNN LINTON."

CHAPTER XVII

1880–1885

FOR six months Mrs. Linton tried to live her old London life, working hard, of course, for with her idleness would have meant "suicidal vacancy." And though some may perhaps be inclined to question the value of her work to the world, there can be no question as to the value that it was to herself. "The fox is worth nothing," says Sydney Smith; "it is the catching alone that is the sport."

This year, in addition to her ordinary "darrack," she became a regular contributor to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, then under Mr. John Morley's editorship.

She was also busy with novel-writing. *The Rebel of the Family* was running serially in *Temple Bar*, and before it was finished *My Love* began its course in the *Bolton Evening News*. Both were afterwards published in three-volume form by Messrs. Chatto & Windus. The price she was now receiving for the non-serial rights of her novels was from £600 to £800.

Originally intended to bear the title, *The Bishop's Granddaughter*, *The Rebel of the Family* was the first of her novels in which she dealt to any considerable extent with the Woman Question. It is one of the best stories she ever wrote. The principal characters are interesting and well studied. Especially is "that complex and bewildering Perdita, whom no one understood, and whom so many afflicted," a creation not easily forgotten. And to make the reader care for and admire such a piece of cold calculation as Thomasina is in itself no mean triumph.

This year Messrs. Chatto & Windus also published a volume entitled *With a Silken Thread, and other Stories*, which she dedicated to her "dear friends of lang syne," Mr. and Mrs. Henry Wills.

It was about this time that she made the acquaintance of Mrs. Campbell Praed, whose first novel, *An Australian Heroine*, was just about to be published. I shall here insert the interesting note with which that brilliant writer has so kindly favoured me.

"I find to my great regret," she writes, "that I have no note, taken at the time, of my first meeting with Mrs. Lynn Linton, nor have I kept her earlier notes and letters, which were more or less formal. The first time I ever met her was, I think, in 1880, at a dinner-party given by the late Mr. Frederick Chapman, the publisher. It was shortly before the publication by him of my own first story, then in the press, and it was my first introduction to literary society in London. I remember being greatly struck by the kindly, dignified, and extremely handsome woman, much older than myself and so much thought of in the world of books—then unknown to me as far as their authors were concerned—who talked to me as a mother might have done about my new venture, welcoming me so sweetly and giving me kind practical advice.

"I met her several times on the occasion of that visit to London, and was so much attracted by her that it was arranged that she should stay with us in Northamptonshire; and we were all looking forward to the visit when a bad cold sent her abroad—to Palermo, I fancy—and it was three or four years before I saw her again.

"Then she settled in London, and from that time we met frequently. It was one of my great pleasures to drive with her and listen to her talk in the intervals between her calls. Her voice was in itself delightful, it was so sweet; and her talk, though never exactly 'booky' to me, was so interesting.

"The contradictions in her nature always puzzled me. She had the reputation—founded on her *Saturday Review* articles, I imagine—of being very hard on women. So she was—on the women whom she thought unwomanly or in any

way false to themselves and to her ideal of womanhood. I have heard her speak of such in the bitterest terms; yet, in actual intercourse, the only side of her I ever saw was that in which womanly sympathy with other women seemed the most prominent characteristic. I have never known a woman more intensely sympathetic with all the little cares and troubles of domestic life and with womanly weaknesses and emotional frailties. Her tenderness with such was extraordinary.

"She was such a curious mixture, too, of the man and the woman. She liked things gracious and well-ordered. I have seen her at the rooms where she was staying darning the tablecloths herself because she could not bear to see them unmended. She liked pretty clothes—was always the first to admire and commend a becoming gown—yet when talking on intellectual and social problems would horrify some women by her 'masculine' views.

"Her materialism was another puzzle. She would listen indulgently and sweetly to me, when I talked to her of my own hopes and beliefs; would attribute them to weak health;[1] would to a certain point be sympathetic with them, and would even tell me of half-mystical experiences of her own—then would demolish all by some unanswerable materialistic assertion. I wasn't clever enough to argue with her, yet the subject had a fascination and was often brought up between us.

"I used continually to be struck with Mrs. Lynn Linton's ever-springing youthfulness and pleasure in the mere fact of existence. It was either her seventieth birthday or just afterwards, and she was sitting with me one evening and telling me of the fact, and of how she had a sort of animal delight in nature and in the joy of life, so that when she rose in the morning—and the expression struck me as coming quaintly from one of her age—'It is, my dear,' she said, 'as though I were going forth to meet my love;' and in one of

[1] In *The Rebel of the Family* she makes Leslie say, "We have power over ourselves only up to a certain point and under certain healthy conditions; beyond these we are no more free agents than so many stones set rolling down the hill or so many leaves blown about in the wind."—G. S. L.

MRS. LYNN LINTON

FROM THE POSTHUMOUS PORTRAIT IN OIL BY THE HON. JOHN COLLIER

her letters comes this, 'I am at the present moment ridiculously well. I believe I completed my five-and-twentieth year last week or so—at Arundel, where I have been for a fortnight, and where I found somehow an atmospheric Castalia that made a new woman of me.'

"In sad contrast to this is the last letter I ever got from her—or the last that I have preserved—written in 1897—

"'I am not strong! I am all to pieces. I can neither rest nor work. Do you know that terrible unrest of weakness—the enforced idleness which you feel you must in all duty break into activity—and, when you try, you sink back and pant and faint? I am in that state, and to an active person like myself, whose desires travel fast and whose powers slink behind, it is painful beyond measure. Well, I shall get well in time, and I shall some day see you again. . . .'

"She often talked of her 'religion of self-respect.'

"'I will not barter my sense of self-respect,' she writes, 'for any one or anything in the wide world, and I am too old now to be very supple in the knee or back. Only when I believe and respect do I bend my knee and bow my head. Where I do not, I cannot and will not for any advantage to be gained by subservience or loss by stiffness. . . .' She carried her hatred of deceit and shams into everything. Her greatest commendation for a woman was that she was 'loyal' — that was the quality on which she prided herself."

Mention having been made by Mrs. Campbell Praed of her reputation for hardness, for which the articles in the *Saturday Review* doubtless were mainly answerable, this appears to be as good an opportunity as any for showing the reverse of the medal.

Rarely, I should think, were fierceness and tenderness more strangely mated. And the one was as native to her as the other. With her highly vitalised and ardent nature, swift and sudden resentment was a matter of course. When she wrote those fiercely denunciatory letters to the papers, people sometimes laughed and said how well she was "playing the game." But those who knew her, knew well that hers

was no mock indignation. She took her mission with all seriousness, and she, "the mother of the world," must whip it into right doing, and check it in its mad career towards Tophet.

No doubt it was hard for those who only knew her in her public capacity, and regarded her as a sort of literary swashbuckler, to believe that in private she was essentially lovable, generously sympathetic, tender-hearted to a fault, and curiously humble. And her kindness was not the weedy kindness of an easy-going nature. It was the positive thoughtfulness of one who looks upon kindliness as an art to be assiduously cultivated. Take, for example, the infinite pains at which she always was to hearten up those around her for the battle of life. She was the very antithesis of the candid friend. She had no patience for those who were for ever nosing out the bad points in people for chastisement. Those who were mortified by their shortcomings must have their good points discovered and encouraged. People wanted setting up rather than putting down. Provoke their self-respect, and the morbid vices—the dead tissues of the character—would slough away.

Here is one of her inspiriting letters, written in the album of a worthy couple with whom she had lodged in the summer of 1875—

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,—If I were a poet I would write you a pretty little 'adieu' in verse. Being only a writer of prose, I must put my love and thanks into straightforward English, as straightforward as yourselves. I am leaving you, sorrowful at parting from such good and true people, but glad that I have known you. I shall never forget your kindness to me, nor how cheerfully you have gone out of your usual ways to help and please me. I shall never either forget the lesson of patience and self-respect learnt from you both: the dignity with which you bear your troubles and annoyances, the charity which penetrates all your feelings. I hope that a kind fate may once more lay my hands in yours, and that you may be happy, prosperous, and beloved as you deserve to be.—Your obliged and affectionate friend, E. LYNN LINTON."

Here is another to her niece—

E. L. L. TO MISS AMY MURRAY.

"238 MARYLEBONE ROAD,
7th April 1880.

" . . . Remember that you may trust me implicitly with all your thoughts and feelings, and even weaknesses and faults. I understand human nature and youth above all, and I can feel for even the sinfulness of men and women. And I am *safe*. . . . You will do well to take up some pleasant occupation that will interest and absorb you. I can remember when I was young, the terrible *ennui* and tedium of life. There was no happy love to make earth a paradise, and there was no great duty to fulfil, and feel at night a certain satisfaction in having done what ought to be done. Life is hard in this way to the young! Full of unformed hopes and vague longings, dissatisfied with what is and always wanting what is not, it is the restless trial-time of every young heart before life has opened and cleared itself for them. Try your strength, dear, in one direction after another till you have found what suits you best, and shake yourself free from all hauntings and vague regrets and dreams. They never come to anything. Believe one who has passed by the same way! The happiness that will some day come to you, dear, will be by channels unexpected and at present unknown. You are a good, dear girl, and you deserve to be happy, and will be some day.

"You must write to me soon again, and not mind scrubby answers. I pack up a deal in a small compass. You must look at my letters as Liebig or Brand's essence, meaning a vast amount if you would only spread it out!"

Here is what she wrote to Mr. Sargent, the hall porter at Queen Anne's Mansions—

"I always look on you, Sargent, as one of the incorruptible men of the world. I would trust in your word, your honesty, your sincerity and fidelity, as I often say of Best's honesty—'with my eyes shut.' Best, that little jeweller who used to come and see me so often, is also one of the incorruptible men. He would not do a wrong action for any advantage to himself. Nor would you."

See, too, what Miss Harraden said of her in the *Bookman*—

"Her influence was entirely a healthy and virile one. She had a horror of anything which approached weak morbidness and unwholesome introspection or self-centredness. But the least sign of vigorous pluck to contend with difficulties physical, mental, moral, called for her unmitigated admiration, respect, and support. . . . She sent innumerable letters—all love letters—like her letters to all those whom she loved—to brace me up to fresh strength and endeavour."

And here we come upon a virtue which was peculiarly hers, but which, by some curious irony, she has been so often charged with lacking—a virtue to which a hundred witnesses could be called to-day—a virtue in the exercise of which she might almost be said to have spent herself unduly.

Even as I write there comes to me a letter which speaks of her as being "hard . . . on other authors," of her being "cynical even to ill-nature." For the life of me I cannot tell what this means.

Just read this passage from an interview published by Mrs. Tweedie in *Temple Bar:* "Lying on a table in Mrs. Linton's sitting-room was a large bundle of MSS., upon which I naturally remarked to my hostess, 'What a lot of work you have there on hand; surely that means two or three new books!'

"'Not one is my own. Bundles of MSS. like these have haunted my later life. I receive large packets from men and women I have never seen and know nothing whatever about. One asks for my advice; another, if I can find a publisher; a third inquires if the material is worth spinning out into a three-volume novel; a fourth lives abroad and places the MS. in my hands to do with it exactly as I think fit, etc.'

"'How fearful! But what do you do with them all?'

"'One I once returned unread, for the writing was so bad I could not decipher it, but once only; the rest I have always conscientiously read through, and corrected page by page, if I have thought there was anything to be made of them. But to many of my unknown correspondents I have had to reply sadly that the work had not sufficient merit for publication,

and, as gently as I could, suggest their leaving literature alone and trying something else.'

"'You are very good to bother yourself with them.'

"'No, not good exactly; but I feel very strongly the duty of the old to the young, and how the established must help the striving. And I am so sorry for the people, and know how a little help or advice given at the right moment may make or mar a career, and how kindly words of *discouragement* given also at the right moment may save many a bitter tear of disappointment in the future.'"

So, too, have I come in upon her in later years, poring with her nearly worn-out eyes over some hopeless and crabbedly written MS., lest perchance she might miss some redeeming point in the miserable affair which would justify her in sending a hopeful word of encouragement; and one stout volume at least which took the world by storm in these latter days I know she practically re-wrote from beginning to end, and neither received nor looked for any other acknowledgment than the barest of thanks.

Here are two specimens of her letters written to young literary aspirants, the first one of general advice, the second criticism of a MS.:—

"You had better begin by writing quite short stories. You have not power or experience yet for a novel of any length, and there is no use in beginning anything before you have a clear idea of what you want and mean to write about. A title is all very well, but the title is only a finger-post, remember, it is not the temple itself. Get your mind clear before you begin the actual work, and do not be afraid of your own ideas, for you will never do anything in life, or in literature, if you begin on no foundation, and then get sick of this bit of froth only to begin another just the same way.

"Try your hand at quite a short story, of not more than three actors and of a very simple plot; write it with a method; know first of all what you want to write about, and have the characters quite clear in your mind. If it is to be a love story, devise the sorrow or obstruction, and plan the action and the persons, before you write a word. Then jot down the skeleton idea as you have thought it out, and

then clothe it in words, enlarge and elaborate. But always remember to have your *skeleton* idea clear to your own mind before you set down a word. As for handsome young men and silly girls, I do not think you know enough of life, my dear, to do without them. You are but a girl and your writing must necessarily be like a girl, and only its truth to your own nature and experience would make it valuable.

"However, it is worth while to try; and if you have any stuff in you, it will come out, and if you have not, no harm is done."

And again—

"BROUGHAM HOUSE, MALVERN,
23rd February 1898.

"MY DEAR ——,—I have had your sketch. It is clever and well done for what it means to be, but to my mind it is far too long for the very slight story in it, and it is inconsequent in that you make a great deal of the free thought at the beginning, which ends in nothing. I am out of young society now, but are such people as Sant and Feo possible in modern drawing-rooms? Would a man on a first introduction eat that half-sandwich, drink out of the same cup, go home unasked in the same hansom, and squeeze the ungloved hand of a girl of good birth and morals? In earlier times he would have — perhaps—treated a loose woman with this familiarity—but a good girl—a lady? And oh, my dear, would any decent girl own to reading *En Route?* I have read those two books, and I, old with a *very* wide area of reading, have *never* read anything so bestial, so obscene, so hideous as are the scenes in those books. You see, clinging to the idea of great purity and modesty in girls and young women, I think that knowledge of vice should come gradually with advancing age.

"Well, what can I say of your sketch more than I have said?

"Cleverly done, too long, far too long for the theme—a little, and more than a little, extreme in detail — not very *vraisemblable* in the man's character—and to my mind an odious representation of the girl, unless you mean her to be a *cocotte*—for she speaks and acts like one as things are.

"I know nothing of any magazines, but unless you make the plot stronger, and considerably curtail the writing, I don't

think it will be sure of acceptance. I see, too, you use the present tense, which I and most other writers (save Rhoda,[1] the original sinner) do not admit as good style. You are clever, and I think *have it in you;* but yours is so far outside my sphere of thought and social knowledge, that I can scarcely judge of your truthfulness of presentation. It's not my world as I knew it that you give, but I know nothing now of up-to-date London young society.—Affectionately yours,

"E. LYNN LINTON."

Again, read the following letter, the first of a series of no fewer than fifty written to one young author who was at the time a complete stranger to her. There is hardly one of the fifty which does not contain brave words of encouragement, sound practical criticism, and advice or introductions to publishers or editors.

"MALVERN HOUSE, GREAT MALVERN,
31*st August* 1894.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Your letter is just lovely. Your feet are on the golden stair, and you have only to persevere—to take courage—to overcome your destructive self-torturing sensitiveness—to work out the sweet and gracious gift that is in you, and in doing this to be so far a barrier against the flood of vileness which is sweeping over our literature. I think your story one of the sweetest and most touching I have ever read, and I will not sympathise with one movement of despair. No! Look up and take heart, and remember that no success in this world has been made without pain, endeavour, and many a fall before the rise. When I go back to London in October, come and see me. I will be your *tonic.* Thank you for the magazine. I will not send it back, because I will keep it to lend and talk about.

"If you cannot brace yourself to a three, two, or one volumed novel, write a book of short stories; but why not try for at least a one-volumed book? Get a good plot—a good strong situation—vivid characters and *noble motives*—and write a beautiful book of one volume—a 'pseudonym' or under your own name. Don't be over sensitive—don't be lonely and cast down—make friends somehow, and live out

[1] Miss Broughton.

of yourself so far as you can—and trust to your own powers. Be glad of your young life and your future and your gifts, and for God's sake *don't despair*."

At a later stage of this correspondence the author sends a MS. story which Mrs. Linton goes to the expense of having type-written, by which she may the better judge how it will look in print!

And this is the woman who was "cynical to ill-nature" and "hard on other authors"—who writes fifty letters to one of the many who seek her advice and criticism, and who never passes a day without spending herself on work of this kind, the while she is hard put to it to get forward with her own exhausting labours.

Here is what she indignantly writes to Mr. Rider Haggard—

"I scarcely know the feeling of jealousy—professional jealousy not at all. I have plenty of indignation, scorn, whatever you like, against humbugs, touters, *made* reputations—people like X——, who sends me a form of subscription for her yet unpublished novel, and a request for a review of it, etc. etc.; men like that puny traitor who requested an 'interview' for the *Pall Mall*, and, kindly received and treated, made his dirty guinea by a slashing attack on me, accusing me of selfishness and ill-will towards the younger professionals—for all and such as these, yes, blows and lashes straight and strong—but for the good workers, if they have leapt to fame as you and Rudyard Kipling, and, soon will, Barrie, I have not the faintest feeling of chagrin but only one of hearty pleasure."

By the beginning of June Mrs. Linton had given up Hayter House for good, and was in Paris.

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"7 RUE DU COLYSÉE, CHAMPS ELYSÉES, PARIS,
2nd June 1880.

"I have made my grand move and broken with London for the present. When I return I am in a dozen minds to

break with it altogether, and settle in some pretty country place where I can have a little garden, a man and his wife and the sunsets.

"I am growing too old for the racket and noise and turmoil of London life. I like a little of it, but it is impossible to regulate these things, and when you are in the rush you must keep in it."

By the middle of June she had moved on to Bex, Canton de Vaud, Switzerland, where she was hard at work on her novel, *My Love*, and enjoying the flowers and the "Osmunda-like big bracken."

From Bex to Pontresina.

E. L. L. TO THE SAME.

"PONTRESINA, *15th July* 1880.

"I calculate that you will get this and my little parcel on the dear old 19th with its flavour of cherry tart and the shilling's worth of goodies we used to have. How long ago those days seem to be, Loo! but the childish love, with all its quarrelling, has lasted into full-grown maturity to the first steps into old age, without the quarrelling to keep it company! . . .

"My new book goes apace, *My Love*. I will send you a copy of *The Rebel of the Family* when she comes out in three volumes."

In August news came to her of the serious illness of her dear friend and editor, Mr. W. H. Wills, and of his desire to see her. He knew he was dying, and wished to give her instructions for the finishing of his last book. Lady Priestley, his sister-in-law, tells me that he said that Mrs. Linton was the only person in the world who could carry it through. She at once started for England, but was taken ill on the way and was delayed for two or three days. By the time she arrived it was too late. The manuscript was brought to his bedside and he desired her to read it aloud. Finding, however, that he was past understanding what he himself had written, he turned his face to the wall and never spoke again. "My poor friend died last evening at 6.30," she writes on

2nd September, ". . . I am very, very much broken by the strain and sorrow of it all."

She at once started for the Italian lakes.

At Como a very unpleasant encounter took place, which resulted in the following interesting correspondence:—

E. L. L. TO MR. HENRY JAMES.

"COMO.

"MY DEAR MR. JAMES,—As a very warm dispute about your intention in *Daisy Miller* was one among other causes why I have lost the most valuable intellectual friend I ever had, I do not think you will grudge me half a dozen words to tell me what you did really wish your readers to understand, so that I may set myself right or give my opponent reason. I will not tell you which side I took, as I want to be completely fair to him. Did you mean us to understand that Daisy went on in her mad way with Giovanelli just in defiance of public opinion, urged thereto by the opposition made and the talk she excited? or because she was simply too innocent, too heedless, and too little conscious of appearance to understand what people made such a fuss about; or indeed the whole bearing of the fuss altogether? Was she obstinate and defying, or superficial and careless?

"In this difference of view lies the cause of a quarrel so serious, that, after dinner, an American, who sided with my opponent and against me, came to me in the drawing-room and said how sorry he was that any gentleman should have spoken to any lady with the 'unbridled insolence' with which this gentleman had spoken to me. So I leave you to judge of the bitterness of the dispute, when an almost perfect stranger, who had taken a view opposite to my own, could say this to me!

"I know that you will answer me. And will you send back this letter? I will forward it and your reply to my former friend, for unless he saw what I had written, he would believe that I had given you an indication of my view and that out of personal kindness you had responded in a sense favourable to me.

"I write to you from lovely Lake Como, but as my time here is uncertain, and when you receive this still more so, I give you the only permanent address that I have.

"I hope that you are well and happy. I have read your *Confidence* and *The Madonna of the Future*, etc., since I saw you. My admiration of your work increases if that were possible.—Most sincerely yours, E. LYNN LINTON."

MR. HENRY JAMES TO E. L. L.

"MY DEAR MRS. LINTON,—I will answer you as concisely as possible—and with great pleasure—premising that I feel very guilty at having excited such ire in celestial minds, and painfully responsible at the present moment.

"Poor little Daisy Miller was, as I understand her, above all things *innocent*. It was not to make a scandal, or because she took pleasure in a scandal, that she 'went on' with Giovanelli. She never took the measure really of the scandal she produced, and had no means of doing so: she was too ignorant, too irreflective, too little versed in the proportions of things. She intended infinitely less with G. than she appeared to intend—and he himself was quite at sea as to how far she was going. She was a flirt, a perfectly superficial and unmalicious one, and she was very fond, as she announced at the outset, of 'gentlemen's society.' In Giovanelli she got a gentleman—who, to her uncultivated perception, was a very brilliant one—all to herself, and she enjoyed his society in the largest possible measure. When she found that this measure was thought too large by other people—especially by Winterbourne—she was wounded; she became conscious that she was accused of something of which her very comprehension was vague. This consciousness she endeavoured to throw off; she tried not to think of what people meant, and easily succeeded in doing so; but to my perception she never really tried to take her revenge upon public opinion—to outrage it and irritate it. In this sense I fear I must declare that she was not *defiant*, in the sense you mean. If I recollect rightly, the word 'defiant' is used in the tale—but it is not intended in that large sense; it is descriptive of the state of her poor little heart, which felt that a fuss was being made about her and didn't wish to hear anything more about it. She only wished to be left alone—being herself quite unaggressive. The keynote of her *character* is her innocence—that of her *conduct* is, of course, that she has a little sentiment about Winterbourne, that she believes to be

quite unreciprocated—conscious as she was only of his protesting attitude. But, even here, I did not mean to suggest that she was playing off Giovanelli against Winterbourne—for she was too innocent even for that. She didn't try to provoke and stimulate W. by flirting overtly with G.—she never believed that Winterbourne was provokable. She would have liked him to think well of her—but had an idea from the first that he cared only for higher game, so she smothered this feeling to the best of her ability (though at the end a glimpse of it is given), and tried to help herself to do so by a good deal of lively movement with Giovanelli. The whole idea of the story is the little tragedy of a light, thin, natural, unsuspecting creature being sacrificed as it were to a social rumpus that went on quite over her head and to which she stood in no measurable relation. To deepen the effect, I have made it go over her mother's head as well. She never had a thought of scandalising anybody—the most she ever had was a regret for Winterbourne.

"This is the only witchcraft I have used—and I must leave you to extract what satisfaction you can from it. Again I must say that I feel 'real badly,' as D. M. would have said, at having supplied the occasion for a breach of cordiality. May the breach be healed herewith! . . . Believe in the very good will of yours faithfully, H. JAMES."

In the early part of October she left Cadenabbia for Florence. Of the stage from Milan she writes—

"At 9 I started for the train, picked up my luggage, took my ticket, fee'd my doctor, and got into a carriage full of Italians. They were all innocent of soap and water and of clean linen, and smelt! They would not have a window open, and if they did open one at any station where we stopped, a man was sure to lean all his whole body out and effectually stop the fresh air. It was the Black Hole of Calcutta and worse, but their good tempers and amiability to each other and to me! When they left—which, thank goodness, they did at Bologna at two in the morning!—the fat, frowsy, handsome, dirty lady by me shook hands and thanked me for the grace of my company! Their sweet smiles! Their graciousness! I do not wonder at people loving them—but their dirt, their lies, and their dishonesty!!!"

At Florence she was taken seriously ill, and was threatened with brain fever and possible blindness. After several weeks of very drastic treatment, she writes with admirable courage—

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"HOTEL ANGLO-AMERICANO, VIA GARIBALDI,
FLORENCE, *3rd December* 1880.

" . . . Don't be anxious about me; my health is now quite good. . . . My eyes are still untrustworthy and bad. I am not quite sure of my sight; but if I am to be blind, I shall find philosophy and strength enough to support that trouble and to organise my life in comfort, usefulness, work, and dignity. So long as I can keep the clearness of my intellect and sense of vigour and enjoyment and health and sympathy with all forms of beauty and life, of joy and of suffering such as I have now, I shall be happy.

"I may not lose my sight, of course; the doctor says I am less in danger than I was, and he gives me every hope of preserving it, so I do not worry myself or fret in any way. I do my work, and go out and do my social duties and my sight-seeing as blithely as ever. When I have to be bled and go to bed in the dark for twenty-four hours, I go and don't fret a single moment. All my old strength of will and of patience has come back to me, and I am not more than thirty years old!"

The next extract from a letter of this date will be read with interest by the members of the Incorporated Society of Authors.

"All publishers are tradesmen; not all are swindlers, but they drive a hard bargain when and where they can, and care no more for their author's *rights* than a sharp merchant cares for the loss to a bankrupt of goods bought below cost price and sold at 200 per cent. advance. It is a war, but war may be civilised—that is, strictly honest—or barbarous—that is, dishonest. X——'s are honest; they will take the skin off you, if you will let them, but they will not rifle your valise."

The beginning of 1881 found Mrs. Linton recovering from a severe attack of pleurisy, through which she was tended "with the skill of a trained nurse and the devotion of a

daughter" by Miss Johnson, whose acquaintance she was fortunate enough to make in her exile.

By the beginning of February she was able to move on to Rome *en route* for Palermo, which, in company with Miss Johnson and her friend Miss Armstrong, she reached on the 20th.

From Rome she wrote to her niece—

E. L. L. TO MISS AMY MURRAY.

"HOTEL DU LOUVRE, ROME,
6th February 1881.

"DEAREST AMY,—I have to thank you, darling, for two sweet letters, the first of which I have been intending to answer for a long time, but I was prevented by my illness, and this last which came as the accusing spirit in a very sweet and gentle and loving form, an appeal to my own conscience rather than a rebuke! Well, darling, I have been very ill and almost blind, but now I am all right. I had, and have still, congestion of the retina, and then I had gastric fever and pleurisy; but a kind, dear lady in the hotel nursed me night and day, and I had a good doctor; so I am all right again, save for a certain little adhesion of the rib to the pleura or the pleura to the rib, whichever you like to call it, which will go away in time. Meanwhile I am all my old cheerful and energetic self, if not quite so strong as I was. But I do not make troubles in life—'borrow troubles,' as the Americans say—and I try to live down and live through all that oppresses and worries me, and to look up into the sunlight and not back into the darkness. It is the best way, but difficult to get at. In early youth all troubles are so gigantic, all sorrow so insurmountable, so eternal. By and by, as time goes on, we feel that eternity has come to an end, and we are quite ready to enjoy as we used, to love as we did. Then we begin to feel that it is as well to distrust our own passionate despair, and to try to control our anguish. It is hard, hard! Perhaps we only come to it when age has helped us and we have less passion to conquer and weaker emotions all through."

In the following letter of this period she gives conditional assent to the practice of vivisection.

"I confess frankly that this is one of the matters in which I have chosen my captains and have not examined the thing

independently. I have neither time nor specialised knowledge enough, and if I did, my word would have no weight, for, among the contradictory things said, I should only be an echo of one, without being able to give facts and proofs by experience. I say—as you so truly put it—such men as Darwin and Huxley know better than I. Let me see what they say. As they pronounce so will I accept. And I see, too, that physical pain is the law of the universe, and also that the minority must suffer for the majority, and that all forms of life exist by the victimisation of others. If this be so, then, horrible as vivisection is, if the results are valuable to the race at large, I cannot but hold it lawful, for it seems to me impossible and illogical to say we will not get great and incalculable gain for all ages and all generations by the sacrifice of a few, because this sacrifice entails that suffering under which we all must be brought. We engraft cancer, say, to learn the course and cause of the disease. It is frightful to the dog, but if the millions of human beings who die of it now can be reduced to zero, is not the sacrifice lawful? I must think so! You are revolted by the methods of vivisection and by the uselessness of some of the experiments. But are they really useless? *If* useful, I hold them lawful. If they are done for the mere lust of curiosity and without practical ulterior end, I am with you heart and soul. My contention lies all on the *If useful.* And that is, I think, a specialist's question. If you or any one can prove to me that no advance is made in science or in the alleviation of disease by the discovery of causes and symptoms, then am I with you. But if the race gains, then am I not. For I see only the one fact, as I said before, the maintenance and progress of life through sacrifice. And this of vivisection is to me only one of other forms. The gain—if all they say is true—is so illimitable to the race, I cannot but think the method, however awful, a thing to be allowed. But the whole force of my argument rests on the comparative gain to the human race. For *we* must go on whatever else has to fail. And it is not our physical sufferings only that are to be alleviated by the vicarious sufferings of these poor creatures, but the greater loss, the loss of valuable life and of valuable brain

power. A dozen guinea-pigs may well be given to redeem the life of a great leader of men, of a great statesman, a great thinker. The world loses what it will never regain in the life of such a man as Clifford. It is not only his pain but the world's loss that makes the pain of a few animals lawful, *if* by that pain we can redeem such a life. Physical pain is not everything, and look how we suffer! Look, too, at the lifelong *tortures* of the Russian prisoners, of the peasantry almost everywhere. Turn where you will, you see pain and sacrifice—the root of the lily in the mire. It is a mystery, if you will, but it seems to me a necessity and the absolute all-surrounding law of life. Being so, I say then, *if* we gain all that is assumed by vivisection, yes! Prove that we do not, and then No! No! No! I too would join the crusade. But where will you stop? At microscopic research? Will you draw the line at the mammalia? or the vertebrates? But lower creatures have nerves too, and are we to close for ever the great book of biological science because of this reverence to the individual? Let there be restrictions and protection and the denial of mere curiosity, if you can possibly make such laws, but for the rest—and I do not see my way to abolition—I think the moral law has to give way here as elsewhere for the gain of the world at large!"

After four months in Sicily she returned to Castellamare, and by 1st November was back in Rome. "Beautiful, enchanting Rome," she wrote, "I do not think I can resist going back. It is a nameless fascination—no one knows what it is, but all feel it, and all who can, yield to it."

Here she remained until the end of March.

Of the Carnival she writes—

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"HOTEL D'ITALIE, ROME,
10*th February* 1882.

"Carnival is beginning. It begins on Saturday. The streets will be full of jumping, shrieking creatures, who will yell and skip like monkeys. But I am a weak-minded thing, and like it. All sober people hate it, but then sober people as a rule hate the enjoyment of others."

April she spent in Florence, and in May was back in London.

July to November was spent mainly in visiting her friends—Mrs. Joshua in Berkshire, Mrs. Dawson Greene at Carnforth, the Countess Ossalinsky at Penrith, Mrs. Hector ("Mrs. Alexander") the novelist, at St. Andrews, Mrs. Wills in Sussex Gardens, and Mr. Alfred Austin at Swinford Old Manor.

In December she returned to Rome. "It was very pleasant," she writes, "to be met here as I was, as if I had come back to my home. I was given my old room arranged expressly for me, and my old place at table with a camellia stuck into my dinner-napkin, and every one came to meet me like an old friend. It is pleasant after an absence to feel this hearty welcome, and makes up a little for leaving such friends as I have in London. . . . I feel much more at home in Rome than I do in London! The atmosphere of London is so terrible, and the wealth oppresses and *impoverishes* me. I feel such a pauper there!"

In 1883 a collection of Mrs. Linton's *Saturday* articles was published by the Bentleys in two volumes, entitled *The Girl of the Period, and Other Social Essays.* She dedicated them "to all good girls and true women."

The same publishers had also bought the serial rights of her new novel, *Ione Stewart.* Towards the end of the year it was published in three volumes by Messrs. Chatto & Windus, with the shortened title *Ione.* It was dedicated to Mr. Swinburne, who had honoured her with a dedication two years before. He had also paid her a very handsome tribute in his *Note on Charlotte Brontë*, published in 1877. After speaking of "possibly the very rarest of all powers," that of "imagination applied to actual life and individual character," he writes, "I can trace it in no living English authoress one-half so strongly or so clearly marked as in the work of the illustrious and honoured lady—honoured scarcely more by admiration from some quarters than by obloquy from others—to whom we owe the over-true story of *Joshua Davidson*, and the worthiest tribute ever yet paid to the memory of Walter Savage Landor."

A later generation may of course differ from the contemporaneous criticism of even the greatest. The point of view is so absolutely changed. At the same time, such a testimonial from such a contemporary has a lasting value. Mrs. Linton did not dream of posthumous fame. She was more than content to have it said that she had faithfully fashioned her brick and done her day's work.

This is the dedication of *Ione*—

"MY DEAR MR. SWINBURNE,—One of my earliest novels was dedicated to my beloved 'father,' Walter Savage Landor. This, which must of necessity be among my latest, I dedicate to you, his faithful and loyal friend—as indeed you are the faithful and loyal friend of all to whom you have once given your trust and affection. I deeply feel the honour you do me in classing me among the number of those in whose sincerity you believe and whose friendship you return. Our original bond of union lies in the constant love and enduring thought we both have for our revered old master; but we have others in our devotion to liberty, our belief in progress, our faith in humanity, and our want of fear. I am presumptuous in thus bracketing myself with you. You are one of the captains of thought, and I am only a humble foot-soldier serving in the ranks. But just as captain and private follow the same banner and fight for the same good cause, so I dare to place myself by your side because of our common affection and our common aims. And you will forgive me that I thus link myself to immortality by coupling my name with yours.—Your sincere friend,

"E. LYNN LINTON."

Reviewing *Ione*, the *Times* said, "Mrs. Linton is one of the most original of living writers of fiction. Whatever else may be said of her works, they are stamped with an individuality which is unmistakable. It is impossible to read any of her stories without becoming deeply interested. The present novel is no exception to the rule. It is a love story of profound intensity and tragic power."

The first four months of 1883 were spent in Rome.

On 3rd March she writes, "We are having a touch of March madness. All that we used to hear and read of

English weather is now to be had in Rome. I think the seasons must have changed immensely since history began. How the Romans could have gone nak'd, I cannot understand. *We* find sealskins and furs barely enough to keep us warm. Yesterday and to-day we have a sun like a great blazing world as he is, and a sky like a great vault of hard metal, with a wind that is positively wolfish. . . . There is to be a large evening party at the Embassy to-night, and I am going. Oh, how I hate these large evening parties! I am always so tired and sleepy, and I want to go to bed instead of to dress and flourish out."

In May she was at Florence, and thence moved on to Biella, where she stayed till the middle of September. This she was induced to do out of regard for the secretary and director of the Hotel d'Italia, where she had stayed in Rome—a Piedmontese who had raised himself from the peasant classes. He owned a house near Biella, and told her that if he could show that "a great English lady trusted and respected him, perhaps they (the monied people of Biella) would too, and would put him into a hotel as manager." Admiring his energy and enterprise, she forthwith took his house for the summer, "as a sort of decoy duck or pioneer."

By September she was "dead sick" of her solitude. To what straits she was reduced is shown by the following letters. On 5th September, after a long and particular description of a piece of embroidery upon which she is at work, and of which she says incidentally, "I have done a bit of the border, and it is so beautiful I could not sleep for thinking of it," she concludes, "See what my life is when a bit of needlework rouses my enthusiasm and engages my thoughts! Oh, I have had a dull summer! Well, I leave here Saturday the 21st, and get to Florence for a short time. Then I go to Palermo. I am going to pay a visit at Lord Bridport's place on Etna. He is the representative of Nelson, and Duke of Brontë, as well as Viscount Bridport. I am going there for the vintage, and there I shall be among my own class again, and well fed and amused."

And again on 16th September: "The weather is broken

and rainy, and I have no one to speak to in the house that is speakable with, nor out of it, and when I cannot ramble about the country I am *lost*. What I should have done without my embroidery I do not know. It is like a companion. I sit and stitch, and think to myself, and talk in my head as with two people, and it refreshes and calms my nerves in the most wonderful way. It is just like a companion. . . . I have done my mission here, and now I am glad to be off."

In late autumn she was staying at Lord Bridport's Castle of Maniace under the cone of Mount Etna, "about eight miles from the dirtiest hole of a town, Brontë, which gave the title to Lord Nelson when the King of Naples created him Duke of Brontë. . . . It is thirty miles to drive, all up-hill, through the wildest, bleakest-looking mountainous region you can imagine. A guard came for me from Maniace, armed to the teeth. We live in a state of preparation, not of fear. At sundown the gates are shut, and no one is allowed to go out or come in without special permission and a grand parley. They are not opened till sunrise. Men armed stand always at the gate, and no one is allowed to enter without he is either known or can give a good account of himself. If we go any distance from the house we have an armed escort, and beyond and above all the fear of brigands, rises the great solemn mass of Etna—the cone scarred and seared with lava streams. There is not a house, excepting one or two little hovels, nearer than eight miles; it is a very acme of desolation, grandeur, and awfulness."

Early in December she was back in Palermo.

The two following letters to her great-niece contain a fair statement of her rule of life at this period:—

E. L. L. TO MISS AMY MURRAY.

"HOTEL DE FRANCE, PALERMO,
6th January 1884.

". . . If you are *obliged* to do a thing, to fret under it only makes it more onerous, the burden heavier. Philosophy is a grand stand-by, dear! It braces the mind and lends a

dignity of courage that NOTHING else does. The bravest, most resigned people I know are pure philosophers, who gather strength from common sense and reason, and bear what they cannot break with equanimity and patience. My motto in life has always been, 'Break or Bear.' What you do not like in your life, if you can, get away from it. If you cannot, if duty holds you or circumstances are too strong for you, bear it bravely and do not fret under it. This is the sequel to my first motto, '*Velle est agere*'—'To will is to do.' I have found out that one cannot always do all one would, so I have adopted this other as a *Coda* which means even more than the first. We must all do our best, dear. To me, the freedom from superstition, the *truth* and reality of science, are of greater help and value than that state of mind which believes in things unproved and impossible, which thinks that *their* religion, be it Christian, Mohammedan, Jewish, Buddhist, or what not, is the one sole truth, and that all the rest are false, which nourishes itself on hopes and visions and internal convictions! To me the external world and the external truth of things counts for more than the inner convictions of individuals. These change with climate, creed, civilisation, age, education. But nature is ever the same, and the truths of science are eternal. So, sweet child, do not lose your time in trying in any sense to *convert* me, for you might as well try to lead me back to a belief in fairy tales. Do that and believe that which is best for yourself, but do not think that all minds are alike and that your truth is necessarily the truth to every one else. It is *yours;* cherish it, hold to it, live by it, believe in it, but do not think that all others must accept it to be either happy, strong, or good."

The first half of March 1884 was spent in a "fortnight's knocking about on the salt sea." "I have been to Tunis," she writes, "the Arabian Nights Tales in person! I have never seen anything so interesting! never! It has made me frantic to go again and to go farther."

By May she was back in London, staying with Mrs. Wills in Sussex Gardens. She had now had enough of a nomad life, and was desirous of settling down in England once more, but her health seemed likely to make this impracticable.

On 10th June she writes to Mrs. Gedge—

"The doctor said that if I remain in England I shall have to be shut up for three months, in which case, Lucy, you may go to the joiner's to order a coffin, and when you come back the poor dog will *not* be laughing.

"Then I have all my interests here, pecuniary, literary, intellectual, emotional. . . . I feel I am being punished for my sybaritism in going abroad so much. Now I cannot live in the old cold, damp climate though I wish to do so."

Nevertheless she was determined to give it a trial, and, after visits to the Gordon Lynns at Callander, Mrs. Purdie at Pitlochrie, and Mrs. Wills at St. Andrews, she returned to town, and settled upon the set of rooms at Queen Anne's Mansions which she was destined to occupy for nearly eleven years.

"I have found an eyrie," she writes, "eight storeys high (with a lift, or rather two, to carry me and mine), whence I look over St. James's Park and all London and on to Highgate and the Infinite. If you come to London, as I hope you will next spring, I shall expect to see you come into my stationary balloon."

From this time forward she was a great advocate of what our cousins call "apartment-houses." "I infinitely prefer," she used to say, "a flat to a house. You are well out of the way of burglars and sneaks; you are the proprietor of a splendid view; you enjoy a maximum of luxury at a minimum of cost; and, as my democracy is practical and not theoretical, the servants are my friends."

And on 12th February 1885 she writes to Mrs. Gedge—

"You would be delighted with my rooms; they are really glorious for their pure air and expanse of horizon. I look over everything—fancy eight tall storeys! It is higher than the highest of the new houses; I scarcely hear the sound of the horses' hoofs or the carriage wheels below. It is not even the distant hum of London that floats up here. It is so quiet, so light and fresh."

In August, whilst on another visit to Mrs. Purdie, she began her new novel, *Paston Carew, Millionaire and Miser.*

Then she went to Mr. Alfred Austin at Swinford Old

Manor, and afterwards crossed to Jersey, where she was the guest of His Excellency General Wray at Government House. Of this visit she writes—

"I have had the most delightful five weeks here I have ever spent. The place is beautiful, the life tranquil, the hours moderate, and the punctuality such that you may set your watch by the servants' movements. We are never one minute out of time, or, at the utmost, one minute. . . . Life might be worse ordered than in a pretty house in Jersey or Guernsey."

In October she was back in London, "quite well again now, and fairly settled in my crow's nest, which is *lovely*. It is the sweetest place you can imagine."

CHAPTER XVIII

QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS—1885–1888

NOTWITHSTANDING her continental wanderings, Mrs. Linton had not allowed her journalistic work to suffer. Always priding herself upon the punctual performance of her duties, the interruptions of travel and the discomforts of temporary lodgings were never regarded as excuses for any lapse. The stream of *Queen* articles, coloured by her varying surroundings, ran as heretofore.

In the early part of this year (1885), she had also finished and sold to Mr. Bentley, her autobiographical novel, of which something has been said in the Preface, and from which copious extracts have been made.

In it, as we have seen, she allowed herself to write what was to all appearances a *roman-à-clef*, a form of novel which she often declared to be inartistic and wrong. I say "to all appearances," because, as a matter of fact, *Christopher Kirkland* was not in its essence a romance. In its essence it was an autobiography, truly with names and sexes changed, but still a very different thing from a novel in which the characters are portraits but their actions invented.

Amongst many friends who thirsted for more intimate particulars about the book was Miss Rhoda Broughton. She wrote that she was "burning with curiosity to know where fiction ended and reality began," and bewailed the fact that Mrs. Linton had "adopted the odious, conventional, trammelling, and, in this case, eminently misleading form of the three-volume novel."

This was Mrs. Linton's reply—

E. L. L. TO MISS RHODA BROUGHTON.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
30th September 1885.

"Generous and good! Thank you very much for your dear letter. I wish I could see you, dear, and then we would have a talk. I could tell you so much more than I could write. Mrs. Hulme is a study partly true, partly *evolved;* so is Althea Cartwright, so Adeline Dalrymple. All the rest (so far as I can remember at this speed) are real persons. The real names given are of those who are dead—the Machonochies, etc. etc. . . . Esther is Mr. Linton. I am very glad the book interested you enough to make you write to me. You are a dear girlie for that same.

"The three-volumed form was chosen by Mr. Bentley, and I don't know the fate of the sale nor have I seen many reviews. I have always felt that the book has a certain vitality of its own, and that it will not have one day's life only."

From which we see that Mrs. Linton anticipated for it a success which certainly up to now it has not achieved.

I remember, within a year of her death, pressing her to give her unveiled Reminiscences to the world. Her eyes blazed at me through her spectacles as she raised her hands and beat her knees, with a characteristic gesture, and cried, "Oh, lor'h! oh, lor'h! George, my dear, I dare not! I know too much; I dare not!"

Thus, then, we have to content ourselves with *Christopher Kirkland* so far as autobiography is concerned. Tragic as is his figure, it is of course marred by the fact that it is that of a woman masquerading as a man. It is for this reason that I have here made it my business to strip the figure of hose and doublet and reclothe it in the garments proper to its sex.

The following fact in connection with the writing of the book is worthy of mention, showing as it does Mrs. Linton's high appreciation of goodness in those to whom she found herself in conscientious opposition. It is also a remarkable example of a generous determination at all hazards to let

the other side be heard, even to the possible destruction of a writer's own case.

In chapter iv., vol. iii., she had written an account of her Jewish friends in London, and in so doing had unsparingly criticised the religious position of the Jews generally. Convinced of its illogicalness, she yet hesitated to publish the indictment without giving an equally public opportunity for a reply. She therefore sent a draft of it to Dr. Asher Asher, who will always be remembered as an example of the best type of English Jew, a man of whom so uncompromising a Presbyterian as Dr. Alexander Macleod of Birkenhead said, "His pilgrimage was brief but glorious."

Dr. Asher thereupon wrote her a long letter of refutation, which she forthwith incorporated in the text of *Christopher Kirkland.*

By the courtesy of Dr. Abraham Cohen, Dr. Asher's son-in-law, I am enabled to publish Mrs. Linton's letter in reply.

E. L. L. TO DR. ASHER ASHER.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
26th March.

"MY DEAR DR. ASHER,—Thank you *very, very* much for your dear, good letter. I have incorporated it into the book, heading it with this paragraph: 'In truth and fairness, however, I must say that these views, which are entirely my own, gathered from my reading and fashioned by reflection, were emphatically denied by my Jewish friend spoken of above; who, after all, by his learning and position, has the best right to pronounce on his own religion. I will give his own words, which came in answer to a letter of mine setting forth these views.' (Then follows the letter.) 'I give this letter in its entirety, though it condemns what I have said, and in the minds of many will destroy my whole chain of reasoning. But no other course is open to me as a man[1] of honour; and I have, moreover, too great a respect for my friend—for his profound scholarship, his sincerity, and his faithful piety—not to give him the opportunity of refuting me if he has the truth and I am in error. But my friend's

[1] Written, of course, as by Christopher Kirkland.—G. S. L.

arguments did not convince me of more than mistakes in fact, which did not touch my main point. By the law under which I live and suffer I have to work out my difficulties for myself; and no personal admiration for the moral results in an individual can carry me over to the faith from which these results have sprung. I am like one standing in a barren centre whence radiate countless pathways, each professing to lead to the unseen Homes. By their very multiplicity I am bewildered, and for dread of taking the wrong way, for fear of following after a delusion, I stand in the midst of that barren desolation and take none. The doctrine of a centralised truth and therefore of God's special favour to those who hold it, revolts me by its partiality, its egotism, its exclusiveness and consequent injustice'—and then the book begins again.

"Will this meet your views? You see I am obliged to keep to the unity of my own mind, for the book is my own history, travestied in the sense of sex and certain experiences, but I cannot do other than say what I think and feel; only in this case I am so glad to have had the courage to ask you for your corrections and to have the opportunity of inserting them. I respect your *kind* more than you can perhaps believe. I think the faithful constancy of the religious Jew, through all these ages of persecution, is one of the sublimest things in human history. What a vital faith it must be! What a grand sustainment and consolation! But again and again—those others who have not got it? And God who (if religion is true) has the power to bring all men into the light? —I shall soon come to you, if I may, and worry you with more questions and more talk. It *was* Benvenuto Cellini who saw the devils in the smoke about the circle.—With love to dear Mrs. Asher, your grateful friend, if but a heathenish kind of creature, E. LYNN LINTON."

On Dr. Asher's death in 1889, Mrs. Linton wrote of him: "Tender as well as firm, he could discuss and dissect to the very heart and bone any subject whatever with those with whom he disagreed, without acrimony, heat, or partiality. He would let no false statement pass uncontradicted. He allowed no fallacy to slip in that he could refute. But he always argued with such high-bred courtesy of mind and directness of method—he was always so straight as well as

humane in his polemics—that one loved and reverenced him even when there was no intellectual agreement. For myself, I can speak of this with a full heart. I was a Gentile of the Gentiles in his sight, but he was as sweet and good to me as if I had been one of his own kindred and among the Eldest-born. He never let me feel that he held me in other than true human esteem. . . . He was one for whom I felt the most entire respect, and I longed, had it been possible, for him to give me his dying blessing—the blessing of a good, pure-hearted, pious man, emphatically one in whom there was no guile."

Mrs. Linton was not a subscriber to any of the newspaper-cutting agencies, and indeed took very little interest in the reviews of her books. An exception to the rule was the review of *Christopher Kirkland* in the pages of the *World*. This drew forth from her a letter of remonstrance to her friend Edmund Yates.

The result was the following paragraph in the next issue, in which, without receding from the position taken up by the reviewer, the editor took the opportunity of paying a pretty compliment to the writer of the book, under cover of correcting a mistake of the *St. James's Gazette*.

"No, no, my dear *St. James's*, the author of *Christopher Kenrick* (*sic*) is not, and never will be, Lady Linton. That title may be claimed by the wife, if there be a wife, of Sir J. D. Linton, President of the Institute of Painters in water-colours. Eliza Lynn Linton, one of the cleverest and bravest women of the day, is the wife of W. J. Linton, unsurpassed in his time as a draughtsman and wood-engraver, and not wholly unknown as a Radical, not to say revolutionary, publicist, who has for many years been resident in America."

Whether the *St. James's* made rejoinder that the *World* had better look to the beam in its own eye before troubling about the mote in its neighbour's, as well it might have done, I do not know.

This year (1885) Mrs. Linton also published a short novel of Italian intrigue and revenge, entitled *Stabbed in the Dark*, peculiarly refreshing, even at this date, to an appetite cloyed with the novels of sex "in part mad, in part unclean, and for

the rest unintelligible." The story was suggested by Mr. Rudolf Lehmann's picture of *The Confessional.* The book was dramatised, but I can discover no trace of the play ever having been staged.

It was this year, too, that she wrote an article on George Eliot in *Temple Bar* which provoked considerable comment. Amongst the great novelist's friends who disagreed with Mrs. Linton in her estimate of the position which the Leweses had taken up, was Mr. Herbert Spencer, who felt bound in loyalty to take the writer of the article to task. This was her reply—

E. L. L. TO MR. HERBERT SPENCER.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS.

"MY DEAR MR. SPENCER,—I am *very* sorry to know that you are not so well as you should be for all that you have still got to do for the world. Such men as you ought to be made of cast-iron, never and never know a day's ill-health. I have just been reading your church book, and delighted in it, as I do in all you write. Thank you for the gentle tone of your remonstrance. How quiet and generous and gentle you are! It was —— not —— who told me about Miss Evans, as she was then. It was this story—for to me —— was more antipathetic than any man I have ever known, and his love-making more purely disgusting—that for years prejudiced me against Miss Evans as a girl of infinitely bad taste, to say nothing more. How she *could* have liked him was to me a marvel! When I saw her two or three days I did not like her. It was only after her union with Mr. Lewes that her beauty (in my eyes) came to the front. I remember telling Mr. Linton once, after I had met and talked to her and Mr. Lewes in St. John's Wood, how infinitely ennobled she had become. But as time went on, and the falsehood of their true position increased with the reverence of the world, while Thornton Hunt, who was so thorough, so true to himself, so utterly and entirely apart from all time-serving, all worldliness, went to the wall and was reviled by those who worshipped these others, my soul revolted, and I went back to my first position and despised with loathing the (as it seemed to me) humbug and *postiche* of the whole matter. As I said to you before, there were people who worshipped

these two, who cut me because I separated from Mr. Linton, and who would have held Thornton Hunt good for stoning. Mr. Lewes and Miss Evans were perfectly justified in their union—perfectly—but they were not justified in their assumption of special sacredness, nor was the world, in its attitude of special reverence, which was more than condonation. It is the sense of favouritism and consequent unfairness that has animated me in all I have said. Had there not been so much pretence and falsehood, I would never have told the truth. But I feel a kind of sacred duty to Thornton, who did no more than Mr. Lewes himself. I know it was wrong . . . to break the promise on which the connection was allowed by the husband. I do not defend that, nor do I blame Mr. Lewes's annoyance. I only say that his union with Miss Evans was no other, no more, than any other of the same kind, and that the holiness and solemnity ascribed to it came solely from her success. Had she been exactly the woman she was, and not the authoress she was, she would have been left in the shade by all those who sought her in the sunlight.

"And this is the kind of thing which rouses all the indignation of my nature.

"Forgive me! I am a sinner, I know, and far, far too passionate even at my age, which should have taught me calmness. But I can reverence as well as contend against, and I reverence you.—Yours most sincerely,

"E. LYNN LINTON."

The following year (1886) found Mrs. Linton still hard at work upon her new novel.

"I have been struggling," she writes to her sister on 25th January, "over a bit of work that would not get done as it should, and I have put aside everything until it was finished, as it is just this moment. It is my new story, *Paston Carew, Millionaire and Miser*, in *Temple Bar*, and I had got into a coil! I have written these three chapters five times, and to-day have repatched and repieced them—but at last they are finished and away."

At the end of the year it was published by her friends, Messrs. Chatto & Windus.

It may interest those members of the Society of Authors who but lately were discussing the reasonable wage of the

writer for the weeklies and monthlies to learn that Mrs. Linton's earnings from this source alone were about £500 a year. This included £25 a month for the instalments of her novels, and £3 a week for her weekly articles, the remainder being made up of occasional contributions to the *Fortnightly*, *National*, and other reviews. Of course, in addition to her serial rights, she would also receive a lump sum for the book rights.

The following letter of this year to Mr. Chambers, who had written asking for a serial story for the *Journal* is characteristically independent:—

E. L. L. TO MR. C. E. S. CHAMBERS.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
20th March 1886.

"MY DEAR MR. CHAMBERS,—I should be very glad to write a novel for your journal, but I have nothing by me. I am still in *Paston Carew*, which will not be finished by me till the end of May. I then should try to place a novel for 1887, and, indeed, I had already spoken to Mr. Watt[1] about it. If you decided to take one from me, you would have to assume the workmanship. I would write you the argument of the story, and I would promise you to put in no politics, no agnosticism, and no 'hungry kisses,' which are not in my line, by the way. More than that I do not see my way to, for if I did not agree with you, I should with another magazine—and if, trusting to you, I was rejected, I should have lost all my market. If you have the synopsis of the story, and my promise to be *very* careful and reticent on my peculiar views, cannot you trust the mere workmanship? I do not fail in that, as a rule!

"That, however, is for your own consideration. Whatever you do will be right, for of course you have your magazine to think of first of all things; and though I have never in my life yet disappointed an editor, you may think it wiser to have all the MS. in hand and under your own eyes before you began the printing or concluded the bargain. I shall be very, very glad to see you when you come to London. I have always a very tender and grateful feeling for you.—Most faithfully yours, E. LYNN LINTON."

[1] Mr. C. P. Watt, the well-known literary agent.

After some months in the country, she writes to her sister on 8th September—"I go back to Babylon to-morrow. I am very sorry for some things to leave the country . . . but I am so *demoralisingly* comfortable in that apartment up in the sky."

Like Dr. Johnson, she loved London and always longed to get back to it when she found that vigour had returned to her. This was so to the very last. The splendour of its intellectual activity was ever strong in its appeal. From time to time, when she had finally left it as a permanent place of residence, the hankering would become irresistible. This would be the signal for a visit, from which she would return worn out and exhausted.

Old friends were now falling thickly around her, and on 29th September she writes—

"Death has been very busy among my friends of late. Mrs. F. West of Newlands, Lymington, 81; old Mr. Robinson of Coutts' Bank, 92, I think; and now poor George Loaden, 74!

"They have all had a fair share of life, but the moment never comes when it is enough. I was very much shocked to see George Loaden's death to-day—poor old fellow! dear old Porge! He was a good friend of mine in the years gone by."

The year 1887 found Mrs. Linton hard at work on a new novel, *Through the Long Night*, which, after running serially in a weekly newspaper, was eventually published in book form by Messrs. Hurst & Blackett. Her novels were not, however, so suited to the columns of the weekly newspaper as to the more leisurely pages of the monthly magazine. Their long descriptions and philosophic interludes did not advance the story sufficiently week by week. Her deliberation compared unfavourably with the swifter march of many of her lesser gifted contemporaries.

In addition to her weekly articles for the *Queen*, and occasional articles for the *Fortnightly*, *Temple Bar*, and the *Forum*, she was now turning out articles on a great variety of subjects (sometimes as many as nine in the month) for the *Evening News*, an amount of work astonishing in one

who had now passed her grand climacteric; and all this notwithstanding the fact that she was subjected to incessant interruptions from all sorts and conditions of people, who counted upon her kindness and generosity. Now and then in private she would kick against the amount of time which her complaisance allowed her to spend over the work of others, but not a sign of impatience escaped in the presence of the recipients of her favours.

Writing somewhat pathetically to Mrs. Gedge, she says—"I am a kind of mother of the world now. If you knew my life you would be amazed at all I have to do for others." And again—"Every one comes to me for every kind of thing—references, plans, reading MSS.—all sorts of things, and my time is just murdered among them all." This was all the more trying to her, as she felt that, even without interruptions, time was all too short to do half what she had to do, and that her strength was waning.

"I grudge this rapid flow of years," she writes; "they are all going too quickly, and my strength is going with them! I cannot do one quarter what I did ten years ago—not so much by half as two years ago. I have tumbled off my great strong perch on to a very slender little fellow. But there it is, and we cannot help it."

And again, on 28th August—"I am writing a new novel. It will, I think, be the last. I cannot write now as I did. I get so terribly exhausted. I have been a *hard* writer now for forty-two years exactly, and if I fail a little—a great deal in strength—I have done my darrack manfully while it lasted!"

There was, however, more than ten years of hard work before her, and her tale of books was not complete by half a dozen!

The following letter of this period illustrates her unrestrained enthusiasm of gratitude for simple acts of friendship. As the recipient of the letter writes to me, "Her unmeasured praise naturally made its object shrink. . . . I had to protest that I could not accept the position she gave me, though I was deeply touched by her words. The advance of scientific thought has since shown, far more

clearly than I could hope to do, the fundamental inconsistencies of her position; but her letters remain the expression both of a warm and generous heart, and of a spiritual passion for all that she saw, or thought she saw, as true, beautiful, and good."

E. L. L. TO LADY ——.

"*May* 1887.

"MY DEAREST AND SWEETEST WOMAN, MY MOST RESPECTED LADY,—Your goodness to me touches me far more than I have words to adequately express. The true, pure, holy Christian charity of that white soul of yours is a living poem, an acted prayer, a warrant for the old idea of angels and seraphs. That is what I feel for you. But I feel also, dear—for I am not speaking now to my social superior but to the human being—that you are on a platform I can never reach. The sole effect produced on me by all the different opinions held now by such a saint as you and now by such a moral hero as Mr. Laing, is one of utter bewilderment as to what is Truth; and the greater and greater conviction of subjectivity as the pin to unravel the web. But why and how this subjectivity comes? What is its ultimate meaning? Then I fall back on the barren little rock of agnosticism—I do not know; and there I cling. . . . If I had more money and need not work so hard, I should like to flourish about society with the best; but as things are, I cannot; and my work, which is my life, suffers through my pleasures; so that I am waiting only to find a tenant, when I shall be off into the quiet, still, sweet country, where I shall know only one unintellectual and unreading, but good and pure-hearted woman. I am more lovingly grateful to you than you can possibly divine. There is no one whose love and devotion and enthusiasm go out more passionately than mine to goodness, purity. . . .

"If I cannot follow you, that does not say I do not love you. I cannot follow that pretty pigeon just passing; but I admire its flight and perhaps envy it. So with such as you who stand in a spiritual light and moral altitude I cannot attain. The nothingness of all things weighs on me. I do not see that the mere fact of thought—itself a traceable product—warrants our assuming more than itself. But I

cannot stay to write. . . . My loving thanks again and again,—embroidering the garments of esteem and admiration in which your sweet image is shrouded. May you be blessed and happy in all things!—Most sincerely your grateful

"E. L. L."

By the end of May she found the rush and roar of London insupportable—"maddening," as she expressed it—and started off early for the country, promising herself a visit later on to the old Keswick haunts. "It will be a little heart-breaking to live at an hotel, but one has to break one's heart very often in this life—once more does not count."

By the 23rd of September she was under the hospitable roof of the late Mr. William Wilson of the Keswick Hotel.

E. L. L. to Mrs. Gedge.

"Keswick Hotel, *23rd September* 1887.

"I have waited a day before writing to you (I came on Wednesday evening, and this is Friday), because I wanted to tell you all I saw and heard yesterday. . . . I went through the Limepots to the vicarage; asked the servant to go into the garden, and made her take me through the hall into the kitchen; saw the old chimney-piece in the dining-room, and found out our old faces; went into the study and touched the old book-shelves and cupboards; looked into the pantry and the larder place where we had the flour-bin; and then went over the garden. The gardener gave me a bunch of flowers, and I gave him a shilling. . . . I feel half in a dream here. It is Keswick and yet not Keswick, as I am Eliza Lynn and yet not Eliza Lynn. I sat on the terrace wall while the man picked my flowers. . . . I heard the sounds come up from the road, the voices of children and wheels and dogs and cows, just as we used. It was so strange. I do not think a resurrection of the body would be a blessing, Loo!"

The beginning of 1888 found her in good spirits and improved health. "I am," she writes, "quite well and as full of life as ever—not quite so strong, and with a feeble heart

and scant of breath like Falstaff, but able to live in the full enjoyment of existence."

Early this year she figured as the "Celebrity at Home" in the columns of the *World*, with the result that she was involved in "all manner of disagreeable and unprofitable correspondence," and made the victim of begging letters by the score.

At this time she was again much troubled by failing eyesight, which was a source of anxiety for the rest of her life. At Wiesbaden, whither she went in July, she consulted a specialist, who would only say that he did not think she would be blind, but would commit himself no further. "I am fechting on," she writes, "with pain and heat and all the *pleasant* troubles of getting worse before getting better. I go to the oculist every other day, and have some fearful stuff dabbed into my eyes, which makes them smart galore. . . . I wear big blue spectacles, but still I have to narrow my eyes to a mere slit; and yesterday, when I came home, I had at times to shut them, and walk as if I were blind, with my hand out."

Nevertheless she did not allow her work to slacken, and even added to her regular output by undertaking to write a dozen "travelling articles" for the *World*. These appeared during July, August, and September.

By November she was back in London, and almost immediately fell ill.

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
17th November 1888.

"I had no sooner finished my article than I tumbled-down-Dick into a furious attack of bronchitis, and had to go to bed, hugging linseed poultices for dear life. I am up again, and went out to dinner last night without much bad result. . . . You know how I used to go out every day all weathers? I dare not go near the door in damp, fog, wind, or frost, . . . but with all this I love life and enjoy it, and am not a bit changed in intellect; I have been doing the best work I have done in my whole lifetime, just of late, and

every one says so too. . . . Did I tell you I had another young link in beautiful Carlino's son — a young artist, a Savage Landor[1] from Florence? He came and was accepted, and has gone over to America now, and I had a dear letter from him. This is how I keep young in heart; I have all manner of young adoptions about me, and all the love I ever had in my youth from men and girl friends is now given me by the young. I am their friend and confidante, and they come about me as I love young people to do, with affection and no kind of fear or reserve; so they brighten my life, Loo, in its waning hours, and I am as happy as I can be. Happier than I ever was in the days of fever and fervour and love troubles, and strivings for name and recognition. The divine peace of content, of philosophy, of acceptance of things as they are, even of failing health and vanished strength, and the *dark* that is creeping ever nearer and nearer!"

Early in this month she had written an article entitled "Adventurers" in the *St. James's Gazette*, which called forth the following much-appreciated commendation from the veteran author, Mr. Samuel Smiles. It is curiously prophetic of the occurrences of the past year or two in South Africa.

MR. SAMUEL SMILES TO E. L. L.

"8 PEMBROKE GARDENS, KENSINGTON, W.,
6th November 1888.

"Thank you, my dearest one, for your splendid article in last night's *St. James's*. It is most eloquent, and yet it is literally true. I have said something of the same sort in some of my manuscripts hidden away. I intend to cut out your article and stow it away for future use. No one who knows the English—blood, bone, and muscle, besides brains—but must agree with you. Look at our vigour in annexing all North America—the States and Canada; our conquest of India, beginning with a little shipload of men of commerce; our holding by the Nile, because it is the way to Australia, Borneo, New Zealand, and the South Seas. It is not so much the blue blood, as the mixed race of which

[1] Mr. Henry Savage Landor, grandson of the poet and author of *Alone with the Hairy Ainu* and *In the Forbidden Land*.

we consist. And the blue-blooded men have done other valued work too. As you say, we are still the same, and when the time comes, as come it will, you will see the fighting blood of Englishmen in its place again, and holding together the great united empire of which we form a part. Thank you again, my most manly of your sex, for your splendid article. Though too short, it contains so much.—Ever yours most faithfully, S. SMILES."

At the end of this year she writes to Mr. Fisher Crosthwaite, "Oh, how I wish I was young and strong for just a year, and could go down to Keswick, climb all the mountains, go over all the passes, skate on the frozen lake (I would not despise Blea Tarn, where we used to go and slide), go along the Skiddaw Terrace Road, and row about the lake as we used. Whenever I am not quite well I dream of the lanes and roads about that fairest temple of nature (to me), chiefly of walking in the Limepots or else on the road just opposite the vicarage. I remember it all so vividly *as it was;* it is an effort to remember the changes that are. Next year I hope to go over to Ireland, else I think I should take shelter under my friend Mrs. Wilson's hospitable roof. In any case I hope to see the place again once more at least before I die, and shake hands with all my dear old friends, such as are left me.

"Good-bye, dear Mr. Crosthwaite. There comes a time in one's life when the old, long-tried love conquers all differences of creeds, and when we recognise the truth of truths, that sincerity to our belief, whatever it may be, and love for our fellow-creatures, make a creed and a practice in themselves where we can all meet."

The next letter announces the death of her much-loved brother Arthur.

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
Christmas Day, 1888.

"I did not write yesterday to disturb your Christmas Day, but I had the letter from Galveston, telling me of the

death of that one greatest love of all the men I have ever known.

"It has cut me up very much indeed, and all the more as I must not carry my sorrow abroad to a lot of unsympathising people. He had an illness of only about two or three weeks, the lawyer said who wrote to me, but he did not tell me what his illness was. . . . He died on the 9th of this month. . . .

"And poor Cuthbert Southey also is dead—so we drop off—we of the passing generation, and it seems such a mere day since we were all young and children!"

Writing on the same subject to Mr. F. W. Banks, she says, "It is a star out of the sky, and the heaven of my life is so much the darker for the loss."

CHAPTER XIX

1889–1890

MRS. LINTON was now in the sixty-seventh year of her age, with failing eyesight, and roughly reminded from time to time, by recurrent attacks of bronchitis, that her hold on life was not what it had been. To most workers possessed of a sufficiently comfortable income (for she had put by enough in her second literary period to bring in, with her small inheritance, some four or five hundred a year), these would have been the signals for some slackening of work, some acceptance of ease due to the labourer in the evening. But this was not her way. The relish for work was as strong upon her as ever—so strong, indeed, in this year (1889), that, in addition to as large a production as ever of articles and stories for the weeklies and monthlies, she projected and carried out a visit to Ireland for the purpose of studying Home Rule on the spot.

The picture of this lady, no longer young, more than half blind, and as a traveller very timid, leaving the daily routine to which she was wedded, and starting off alone to stay with strangers in what was to her a strange land, is a not unpathetic one.

Up to now she had been an ardent Home Ruler, "influenced by the seductive charm of sentiment and abstract principle only." By temperament she had found herself affiliated to the Liberal party, and she had been content to go with her leaders so far, trusting them to judge for her in matters of which she had not the opportunity of judging for herself. Taught by them in the matter of Ireland, she had believed in the accusations of brutality, injustice, and general insolence of tyranny, and, shocking though the undeniable crimes

committed by the campaigners were, they seemed to her "the tragic results of that kind of despair which seizes on men who, goaded to madness by oppression, are reduced to masked murder as their sole means of defence—and as, after all, but a sadly natural retaliation."[1]

She knew nothing of Lord Ashbourne's Act. She shut her eyes to the possibility of the dismemberment of the empire. "In a word," as she herself says, "I committed the mistakes inevitable to all who take feeling and conviction rather than fact and knowledge for their guides."

Then there came the opportunity of going to Ireland and judging for herself. She had read and admired an anonymous novel by Mr. J. F. Fuller, the well-known architect and author. Correspondence had followed, and resulted in an invitation to Glashnacree, near Kenmare.

In accepting the invitation she wrote—

E. L. L. TO MR. J. F. FULLER.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
14th June 1889.

". . . Tell the dear wife that the slowest life is the best for me. I am not very strong, and I cannot do much. I cannot go long day-excursions without horrible fatigue, and I am such a coward that I dare not go in dogcarts or rickety vehicles of any kind. As for an outside car, dear man! if you put me into one of those, you will have to bind me with ropes and straps and then blindfold me. I am an arrant coward! but I like nice, dull, simple, slow-going days, with a little walk or a little drive, great friendliness—the supreme of all—opening the family ranks for the moment and taking me in as if I had been born one of you—no fuss, no change, no more consideration than if I were an old tame tabby to be given her place by the fire, and her bite and her sup, and not made into an obstruction or a nuisance. I have no self-assertion, not a bit, and I have an inexhaustible fund of gratitude. You did not tell me you had received my photo—that ought to show you what a tame old thing I am!"

On 26th June she was pulling herself together for the

[1] *Vide* Preface to *About Ireland*, by E. Lynn Linton. (Methuen, 1890.)

journey, and wrote, "I am like the old warhorse at the blast of the trumpet when any exertion has to be made. I am 'all there,' and forget the venerable years lying on my back and head, but just stiffen my shoulders and *go at it*, and then I collapse and am a tumble-down-Dick for a month."

On 2nd July she arrived in Dublin, where she was met by Mr. Fuller, to whom I am indebted for the following account of her visit and conversion. He writes—

"She spent a month with me at Glashnacree near Kenmare, in the beautiful wilds of my native county of Kerry.

"I met her, by appointment, in Dublin, on her arrival by the evening boat; and next day I took her about the city to see the principal sights. I could not induce her to mount one of those 'spidery-looking things,' as she called the outside cars, so I had to be content with a cab. We pulled up in the Phœnix Park at the spot where Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke were murdered, and here our first political discussion took place—postponed by mutual agreement till we got to Kerry.[1]

"Two days later we travelled from Dublin to Killarney, and at the end of the long railway journey I found her so full of life and energy that we 'did' the Gap of Dunloe the same evening. On the following day we started early for Glashnacree. This meant a carriage drive of thirty Irish miles — there being then no nearer railway station than Killarney; but as the scenery on the route is indescribably grand and beautiful, and as the day was a perfect one, she enjoyed the journey thoroughly. We stopped half-way to bait the horses at a spot called 'Windy Gap,' the view from which she declared to be the finest she had ever seen. I ventured on a quotation from one of the works of Sir Arthur Helps—

> 'We drew that breath
> So full, so deep, that ever afterwards
> There is a sense of stifling in grand palaces.'

"She knew it at once and capped it—after interviewing

[1] In her diary for this day she writes, "Drove round Phœnix Park and saw the accursed spot."—G. S. L.

some native children who had gathered round us at a respectful distance — by another quotation from the same author—

> 'Ofttimes a cunning mixture of great lineages—
> Great though obscure—breaks out in the humblest peasant;
> And could we trace that girl's descent, her loveliness
> Would be accounted for, I doubt not.'

"A charming blue-eyed little maiden with bare feet and unkempt head of flaxen hair — doubtless a descendant of Irish kings—took her fancy greatly; but between shyness and brogue, the child was unintelligible. They parted very good friends, however; and no doubt the little girl had a good deal to say, in Irish, about the interview, when she got home to the paternal cabin among the rocks.[1]

"My household numbered four—our guest, myself, wife, and daughter. There were few neighbours and fewer visitors: we wanted none. She ceased to be a stranger on the threshold; and we missed her sorely when she left us. Never was there a less exacting guest or a more delightful companion. After breakfast, her custom was to retire to my sanctum, where she worked till lunch time. The rest of the day was devoted to rambles about the country with my wife and daughter. Botanising was one of her favourite pursuits, and she found much to interest her, as Kerry abounds in plants not found in other parts of the British Isles. The evenings we spent in chatting while she deftly plied her needle on some beautiful piece of embroidery.

"The fact that she left London a pronounced Radical and returned a Unionist has lent a peculiar interest to her month's stay with me. She was so honest-hearted and open-minded that it was only necessary to lay the truth before her and to state an argument fairly. There was no prejudice in her nature; or if there was, her common sense got the better of it. The result of our many talks is to be found in her pamphlet entitled *About Ireland*. She did not hesitate to come forward and boldly renounce in print the beliefs which

[1] In *The Queen* for the 17th and 24th of August 1889, will be found two articles by Mrs. Lynn Linton, entitled "In the Wilds of Kerry" and "A Touch of Paradise," which give a vivid description of all she saw and felt.

she had so long held to be sound. Her faith was shaken, before she left Ireland, in William O'Brien, Davitt, Dillon, and the 'separatists' generally; in the 'Plan of Campaign,' the 'Land League,' and in the stories of systematic oppression practised by the landlord on the tenant-farmer; and it was made clear to her beyond dispute that no more favoured class exists now in any country than the so-called 'down-trodden Irish peasant.'"

It should be clearly stated that it was not from conversations with Mr. Fuller, but from impressions gained from a visit to Ulster in the following year, that Mrs. Linton became a convert to the anti-Popery views of the Orangemen. Mr. Fuller, it is well known, although a Protestant and a landlord, is in no sympathy with those "to-hell-with-the-Pope" sentiments which animate Belfast and pass muster in the north for patriotism. He is no ultra-Tory, although he believes in the mutual advantage to both England and Ireland of the integrity of the empire, holding at the same time that the Act of Union was the greatest misfortune that ever fell upon his country.

The immediate results of this first visit to Ireland were two papers which were written for the *New Review*. As things turned out, however, she came to stand with the editor "somewhat in the position," as she has expressed it, "of Balaam with Balak, when, called on to curse the Israelites, he was forced by a superior power to bless them." So it came about that the first paper was only at last grudgingly published after the lapse of several months, with the backbone, in the shape of extracts from the Land Acts, taken out of it, and her own unsupported statements left to fend for themselves.

This was too much for her, and she determined to withdraw the second, and, with the permission of the editor, to enlarge and publish both in a pamphlet, for which she "alone should be responsible, and which would bind no editor even to the semblance of endorsement."

The result was the publication in the following year, by Messrs. Methuen & Co., of her little book *About Ireland*, which attracted considerable attention as coming from a

thorough democrat and Liberal of old standing, who had the courage to contradict her party leaders as soon as ever she arrived at the conclusion that they had misled their followers.

The following letters refer to her conversion :—

E. L. L. TO REV. CHARLES VOYSEY.

"*9th August* 1889.

"MY DEAR MR. VOYSEY,—Your letter has found me after many days, but not as an enemy—as a dear, kind, good, and generous friend. I have been making a little tour in beautiful Kerry, and am now at Dublin on my way to London. Thank you very much indeed for all the handsome things you say of me; you have always been good to me. Now I am full of Ireland and of the folly that I and other Liberals have been indulging in. Home Rule and all that is bound up with it means simply ruin to the country, loss to ourselves, and the foul fiend to pay all round! I came a Home Ruler, I leave a strong Unionist, a strong believer in Balfour's wisdom, and in the need of a firm front opposed to popular clamour.

"I hope I have not chilled your friendly impulse toward me. Dear Mr. Voysey, we Liberals are becoming riddled through and through with unworkable sentimentality. It is pitiable. Under this washy, treacly overflow we are losing all the fine old force that made us what we once were.

"I should like to see and know more of you. You have been and are a brave man, firm and faithful to yourself to your own loss. I do not know where you stand in politics, at least on this question, but I am afraid you are a Home Ruler, as I was, as *we* all were! We *must* be wise; we must look facts and expediency in the face. There is no sense in abstract political principle. Good and evil are such relative terms! I must say no more, else I shall vex you seriously.—Very gratefully yours, E. LYNN LINTON."

Mrs. Linton need not have troubled herself, for Mr. Voysey, as he told her in reply, was one of those who had never seen anything but trouble in Home Rule.

In the second letter she wrote—

"Yes, I have come back a strong Unionist, having seen

the utter fallacy of the Home Rule cry—its shallowness, its falsity. The peasants want the land without paying for it; the Catholics want to oppress the Protestants, and the agitators want to aggrandise themselves. We, the good, stupid, enthusiastic English, who are being ruined by our sentimentality, and whose politics are all riddled with fads, we are sincere, and we alone—no one else. . . . I am writing some papers about it. I hope I may do a little good, for, so far as things go, and have gone, it is the landlord who is being persecuted, *not* the peasant. So I am now on your side, boldly and wholly, with the proviso that Ireland ought to have a measure of local self-government such as we have in England; but Imperial Government must be one and indivisible."

Of course the old cries of "turncoat" and "weathercock" were raised, for the man with the stiff neck always likes to despise his neighbour who is able to look back over his shoulder.

Like most people of original and powerful individuality, Mrs. Linton, as we have seen, started in her generous youth as a Radical and a righter of women. In middle age she found herself young and enthusiastic enough to adopt the extreme doctrine of Home Rule. But she ended as the chartered enemy of the New Woman, as a Dame of the Primrose League, and as the author of *About Ireland* and *About Ulster*.

In other words, she had the courage of her opinions, and when she was convinced of error made no hesitation in confessing. Not that she ever lost her sympathy for the enthusiast on the other side. She remembered to the end her own insurgent youth, and made generous allowance, where severity was not essential to the matter in hand.

An example of this occurred about this time. Mr. O'Brien was condemned to wear the prison dress, with the rather comic result that we all remember. The new opponent of Home Rule at once wrote to an evening paper remonstrating against the indignity put upon one to whom she was bitterly antagonistic. This called forth a private letter of rebuke from her friend, Mr. A. F. Walter of the *Times*.

This was her reply—

E. L. L. TO MR. A. F. WALTER.

"MY DEAR MR. WALTER,—I am very sorry if I have said anything to annoy you, my dear, good English gentleman. I respect and like and admire you as that so heartily, that I covet *your* respect as a *feather*. I am conscious that I am less of a Radical than I was—oh, tell it not in Gath! for I have a horror of turncoats. Still the inevitable action of life has touched me like the rest, and I am far less insurgent—in fact, not insurgent at all now. Yet, when there comes the same old blast, I prick up my ears like the warhorse of tradition and respond. It does seem to me, dear man, unworthy of an English administration that a political prisoner should be treated with any kind of indignity. That he should be prevented by the powers in existence from doing that which should perhaps threaten their existence, that I can understand. It is the game. But these things should be free from all appearance even of spite, and that men in the position of Mr. O'Brien, and for his offence, should have to submit to the indignity of a prison dress—No! That is Russian, not English! I will listen to you, and if you can convince me, I will say so. . . . It is the repetition of all our action in Ireland, and what have we got by it? Our names are not written in light across that page! Put all the men into prison who offend against the law so far; but let them be treated as political prisoners, not criminals—prevented, not in any way tortured. Don't be vexed with me, Mr. Walter, my dear man! I want to see things as they are. I know I am not a sentimentalist, but I am an old Radical, ever since I had two ideas in my head, and the colour lasts though it may get somewhat washed out by time. . . .

"In haste, as you can see by the writing and the *reasoning*.—Affectionately and respectfully yours,

"E. LYNN LINTON."

In the early part of this year (1889) Mr. Linton returned to England for the purpose of writing one of his books within reach of the British Museum. There was a mutual agreement between him and his wife that they should not meet,

and they did not. On leaving for America he wrote as follows:—

"DEAR OLD LOVE,—We must not lose sight of each other again. Now that I am leaving, and satisfied that we have done wisely by not meeting, I may say that it has been hard for me too. I would have been glad to hold you to my heart again, my lips on yours—but the parting would have been too painful. Dearest, believe me, I would knit our lives together again if I thought it might be; but in some things we have been unsuited, and if in the first fervour of our love this difference could part us, might it not occur again? I could dare to face it, but it would be rank unwisdom. God bless you, darling! It is a happiness that only good thoughts exist between us, that we are, and shall be always, good friends. All that can interest you, you shall always know of from me. Let me know the same of you. I will like to know that you are the one friend to whom I may lay my heart bare, sure of loving sympathy. . . .

"And now farewell, still dearly loved! You love me too.
—Your old lover, W. J. LINTON."

This year there was a movement on foot to raise a memorial in Keswick to Sir John Bankes, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas under Charles I. He was the son of a Keswick "statesman," and in his will had marked his remembrance of his birthplace by a generous bequest to the poor of the district in perpetuity. A marble statue was the form which it was at first proposed the memorial should take, and Mrs. Linton, ever ready to serve her beloved Keswick, wrote an eloquent article on the subject in the *Times*.

But Keswick became divided on the matter, and local politics raged around the proposed glorification of a Westmoreland worthy. The nett result was the intensification of party feeling and differences which it has taken years to heal. Finally, the erection of a cottage hospital to the memory of Sir John was proposed; but Keswick was out of temper, and the matter had to be dropped.

I cannot resist quoting from one of several of Mrs. Linton's letters, in which she refers half whimsically and wholly regret-

fully to the hot-bloodedness of the descendants of her father's old parishioners—

"I see the dear vale keeps up its fighting blood. What a beloved set of fractious fighters they are! Can they possibly agree on anything under the sun? I wonder they all accept the arithmetic of the schoolmaster—that some of them do not take off their coats for two and two making five! It is a great pity they have all fallen out over this monument. They ought at least to have managed to agree on what should have been kept quite a neutral affair, and not have been dragged in the miserable arena of local quarrels and local politics."

Mrs. Linton, as has been said, was the recipient of letters from all sorts and conditions of people, inspired by the subjects of her novels or her journalism. The answering of these she looked upon as a duty she owed to her public—a duty to be attended to scrupulously and punctually. Here is an example, of this period, in which she repudiates the meaning read into her words by one of her audience, and further takes the opportunity of denying that the front page of the *Queen* was used by her as a pulpit for the propagation of any doctrine, system, or belief.

E. L. L. TO X——.

"*24th February* 1889.

"MADAM,—I am very sorry that anything I have written should have caused you pain—but it is pain you have given yourself. You have read into my words a meaning they were not intended to convey, and have fastened on to me a declaration of opinion I had not the slightest idea of myself. The words of which you complain were simply meant to show the transitory nature of individual remembrance—which lasts for the generation only. It had nothing to do with the soul or the life beyond the grave, or any 'ism' whatsoever. It was simply the pathetic truth, that when those who loved and remembered an unnoted little child had died, that child itself would be forgotten and pass into oblivion.

"I think this very evident and undeniable truth, pathetic

as it may be, is not one to call forth any kind of animadversion.

"As for your[1] private opinions — I defy the most scrutinising reader of the *Queen* to construct a creed, a philosophy, a political partisanship out of anything I have said or ever shall say. I know the extraordinarily susceptible character of my public, and am scrupulous to the last degree not to brush by the remotest skirts of confession.

"I thank you for your kind expressions regarding my works.—Faithfully yours, E. LYNN LINTON."

On leaving Ireland Mrs. Linton went for a "cure" to Royat-les-Bains, returning to England at the end of September. She then went into Norfolk to be with her sister, Mrs. Murray, in her last illness. Here she remained during two months, devoting herself entirely to comforting and sustaining in her last extremity "one lived with and loved in childhood and maturity alike."

The prolonged and painful task then proved too much for her, and she was forced to give up her place to her niece, Miss Charlotte Murray.

"The strain," she wrote, "has not touched my health, but it has my nerves, and in church to-day I broke down at one of the hymns and *sobbed*. I was so ashamed of myself, but I was suddenly swept away with a rush of sorrow for all the pain I have been witnessing and all the pain that has to come, and so—made a fool of myself, as I used when I was younger."

That Mrs. Linton's brain was extraordinarily active for a woman of sixty-eight, is shown by the fact that the following year, 1890, which was marked by a long series of contributions to *Truth* in addition to her other periodical work, produced the large sum of £638 earned by journalism alone.

Early this year she seized the opportunity afforded her by the fact that a sketch of her life was to appear in a periodical called *Men and Women of the Day*, to appeal to the editor to put her right with the public on a matter in which she felt she had received but scant justice.

[1] Probably miswritten for "my."

E. L. L. TO THE EDITOR OF "MEN AND WOMEN OF THE DAY."

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
12th February 1890.

"DEAR SIR,—If you could, without overrunning, put in that last little paragraph, I should be glad. I am so constantly spoken of as the enemy of my own sex. I was accused in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of that worst of all vices in my mind, *selfishness*, having now reached my own vantage ground, cruelly and coldly desirous of keeping back all others—that if this one trait of my character could be brought forward, I should feel it an act of justice. I do not suppose any one alive has done so much for others as I have. If I had to make an income by revising MSS., I should make a better one than I do now by writing them! I have a bevy of girls about me who look on me as a mother; who come to me for advice and sympathy, and who are no more afraid of me than if I were one of themselves. I have been the mother and friend of more than one young man of letters, helping with all manner of help, and it does pain me to be set forth as a selfish villain who cares only for her *own* advantage. This is the one accusation that stings and rankles with me. No one *can* say that I have ever truckled or been a snob, or had that low kind of trivial ambition, desiring to be 'seen' at grand places—but the charge of hatred to my own sex, and because of my dislike to political rights of women, the charge of envious desires to keep them back, can be made with more plausibility, and it hurts me terribly when made.

"This letter is one of the foolish things that I do, to imagine that the good, true human feeling, the sympathy and solidarity of race, will make me, a stranger, understood by a stranger. I risk it over again, and I hope I have not been too silly in doing so.—Very faithfully yours, E. LYNN LINTON."

In July, after revisiting the old Cumberland haunts with her sister, Mrs. Gedge, she fled to Llanwrtydd Wells for a "cure." The following extracts are from letters of this period:—

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"*27th July* 1890.

"I have nothing more 'musing to tell you than that Professor Skeat is here. He is the very best philologist

we have, as far before —— as Herbert Spencer is before Drummond; but he is of the non-self-advertising kind, and he will get his recognition only after his death, and then only among scholars, while —— appeals to unscholarly and superficially educated people, whose ignorance he just a little enlightens and only a little.

"The science of language, Lucy, has undergone great changes and great developments since the time when Menes the (hypothetical) Egyptian king sent two children to a desert island to learn what would be the primitive language. But they had goats with them, and when they were brought back they bleated. Last century there was a hot controversy among bookmen as to the original language, which some asserted must have been Hebrew, as Adam spoke Hebrew in Paradise!!"

E. L. L. TO THE SAME.

"*19th September* 1890.

"*Mars* ought to be my planet, 'Star of the unconquered will'—if by that we may mean resolute determination not to be overcome by the pains, the difficulties, the struggles, the sorrows of life. . . . I think the constant struggle and anxiety I have in literature keeps me braced up. A paper has published a portrait of me, a little notice, says I am going on for eighty, and the portrait is more like Mrs. Brownrigg, who whipped two 'prentices to death, than me. It has not a trace of me, and is libellously hideous; so that is not pleasant."

E. L. L. TO THE SAME.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
1st October 1890.

"We can all remain young if we like—comparatively young—but age is as hard to us as youth. In youth we have to learn habits, in age to resist them. We must keep the line as long as we can. When nature herself has decreed our falling out of step, then we cannot help it and we lag behind; but so long as we can, we must resist this death of the mind and body which creeps on and tries to overtake us."

In October she was honoured with the chief place at a

banquet given at the Mansion House to "the International Literary and Artistic Congress."

Referring to her invitation, she writes—

"I am going as one of the 'representatives of literature' to a grand dinner given by the Lord Mayor on Monday to all the first literati of the day.

"I am going alone, . . . but I cannot do anything else. I have no one to go with me . . . on Monday at 'half-past six for seven,' all alone in a crowd, and as bold as you please to look at, and inside all of a trimmle."

After it is over she writes—

"I went to the Lord Mayor's dinner, and was the lady guest of the evening. I was taken in by the Lord Mayor, and sat on his right. It was very grand and fine. . . . I wore my best dress at the Mansion House, a black striped silk and satin with a white front covered with jet, white facings, and an apparently open body of white covered with jet. Eat, blesh yer? I eat some turtle soup and a very wee bit of filetted soles and the vegetables belonging to a slice of mutton, and that was all; no sweets, no wine, no fruit, no made dishes, nothing."

On 12th November she writes—

"I have just sent £5 to General Booth's scheme for Darkest England.

"If you were to read the book, I think you would transfer your Zenana efforts to this bold, comprehensive, and practical scheme of salvation, in every sense, for the vilest scum and *dangerous* classes of England. It has stirred me deeply."

The following letter of this date, though of no public importance, is so characteristic that it may well find a place here. There had been some confusion about a clock to which Mrs. Linton had become entitled by way of a legacy, and she had written to her niece in a letter beginning "My best-beloved Woolly-pate, wrong again!" in which she had proved to her own satisfaction that she was not in a fog but that her niece was. A letter from Miss Gedge put the affair in a very different light, and this was Mrs. Linton's reply—

E. L. L. TO MISS ADA GEDGE.

"Ada, I humbly beg your parding, and retract the wool. I see now exactly how and where the fault and muddle and confusion have been. It was the old story, Ada, of the shield —one side red and the other blue, and the knights fought to the death each for his own colour. Each was right for himself as a *partial* truth; each wrong for the other as a *whole* truth. So there it is as so often in this life—blue *and* red, and both right, though only one side seen. I have written to Mr. J—— and expressed a desire for the black clock if not given to Mrs. C——, in which case I will content myself with the white. And never, oh, never, will I suspect that hairy head of yours of the remotest approach to wool! Perish the thought! . . .

"Well, good-bye, my hair-headed maid, Ada. . . .

"Your penitent and shamed and abashed and atrocious aunt, ELIZABETH LYNN LINTON."

CHAPTER XX

1891–1892

THE year 1891, though uneventful, was productive of some interesting letters. The following tells of her first meeting with Mr. Thomas Hardy, for whose work she had the profoundest admiration:—

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
27th January 1891.

"Yesterday a stranger called on me. The boy said *Harvey*. I was in a fume—could not make out who it was—went round and round the central point, till the stranger said he was going out of town to-day. 'Where?' says I. 'To Dorchester,' says he. Then I ups with a shout and a clapping of my hands, and says I, 'Oh, now I know who you are! You are Thomas Hardy and not Harvey'—(the author of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, etc.). He was so pleased when *I* was so pleased, and stayed here for two hours. He is a nice bit manny, but of a sadder and more pessimistic nature than I am. It was very nice to see him. *We* have *missed* each other twenty times. He said his wife wants to see me, she had heard I was so handsome!!! Says I, 'Then tell her I am *not*.' Says he, 'No, I certainly cannot do that, because you *are!*' So there, Miss Lucy, compliments in one's old age!"

The following letter from one of her heroes in real life gave her great satisfaction. Her reply is interesting as showing how conscious she was of her own literary shortcomings, and yet how powerless she was to keep herself from the "pouring out," and "slopping over," which she so much deplored.

MR. HERBERT SPENCER TO E. L. L.

"64 AVENUE ROAD, REGENT'S PARK, N.W.,
27th March 1891.

"DEAR MRS. LYNN LINTON,—I have just been reading with delight your article on 'Our Illusions.' How I envy you your vigorous style, your telling metaphors, and your fertility of allusion!

"Surely this essay should not be buried in the pages of a magazine. You ought to republish a selection of your longer essays, and first among them should come this one. Clearly its value will be as great generations hence as now.

"Should you republish it, there are two additions which I would suggest. While you have given abundant illustrations of the truth that most things are not so good as they seem, you have not sufficiently emphasised the truth that in many cases things are better than they seem—acts are not unfrequently misinterpreted to the disadvantage of the actor. One may, for example, having paid a cabman more than the full fare, refuse to give him still more, and may be held by him and by by-standers to be restrained by parsimony; whereas the motive may be entirely the desire to check the growth of abuses—the feeling that resistance to extortion is needful for public welfare. Or, again, one may persist in putting down smoking in a non-smoking compartment of a railway carriage, not from personal aversion to the smoke, but from the desire to maintain wholesome law for the benefit of passengers in general, and one may be regarded for doing this as a selfish curmudgeon. You have referred to cases in which the fact, even when known, is illusively interpreted, but it is well to emphasise more fully the truth, that the real interpretation may be more favourable than the interpretation which appears probable.

"Another truth which I think you ought to point out is, that many of the illusions under which we labour are due to the non-adaptation of human nature to social conditions, and that when the adaptation approaches nearer to completion, the difference between fact and fancy will be by no means as great as now.—Sincerely yours,

"HERBERT SPENCER."

E. L. L. TO MR. HERBERT SPENCER.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
28th March 1891.

"MY DEAR MR. SPENCER,—You know what your kind letter is to me, one of the big honours of my life! You are quite right, as of course, and I might have made a point of the illusions of condemnation; perhaps, indeed, those are more frequent, and surely more disastrous, than the illusions of belief, respect, and of love! But I am always afraid of 'summering and wintering' a subject too much, and yet, try as I may, I cannot get to that most valuable of all literary qualities—reserve—the quality which no writer possessed to more perfection than my dear old 'father' Landor. He used to say that he always left a subject before he had sated his reader, and always left it suggested rather than explained. In fiction, Bret Harte has this quality of suggestiveness, of reserve, of indication rather than of exhaustive description, but I have the tendency to 'pour out' and 'slop over!' Perhaps you are surprised at my bringing in Bret Harte as a *master*. To me he is, of style and treatment, of *method*. His work is slight, and does not pretend to a philosophy, but to my mind it is simply perfect in method, or, as the artists say, technique. I hope you are fairly well, my dear master. This bitter weather is not favourable for sensitive and delicate organisations.

"I am greatly exercised by the Jackson verdict. Did you hear that the wives of the two judges were on the bench? An eye-witness of the trial told me. They were there to keep their lords up to the mark. But the matter will not rest here. If this is to be the law for women, so must it be for men, and no deserted wife should be able to claim what a deserted husband is denied. How the old pillars are crumbling, and how fast the process! My thanks and grateful respect.—Always your faithful friend and admirer,

"E. LYNN LINTON."

It will have been gathered from much that has gone before, that Mrs. Linton was capable of that highest kind of friendship and intercourse, which is not weakened, is not even strained, by mere difference of opinions honestly held.

She could not only agree to differ, but enjoyed the striking of mental flint against mental steel, recognising that individual thought is but a dull thing in itself, and that the most brilliant light is often caught at the moment of most violent impact. Discourtesy in discussion she would not endure, but "the clash of arms her spirit warmed," and she never grew angry though her opponent got within her guard.

Her friendship with Mr. William Woodall, the well-known member for Hanley and the champion of Woman's Suffrage, was a case in point.

"My excellent and most worthy foe," "my very dear enemy," "my dear old antagonist," are the terms in which she addresses him.

Now and again, indeed, she seems inclined to distrust herself, and shrinks from the strain which certain issues might put upon her chivalry. "We will not talk of politics," she writes, "as the questions on hand are too grave to admit of joking, and as we have hitherto tilted with only straws and peacocks' feathers, we must not come to ash-sticks or cold steel."

And again, when she was about to give a dinner to her political opponents—

E. L. L. TO MR. WILLIAM WOODALL.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
1st April 1891. (This is not a *poisson d'Avril!*)

"MY EXCELLENT AND MOST WORTHY FOE,—Your abominable principles are *not* to be paralysed for the occasion. On the *27*th *I*, I myself, I, will be the only righteous person of the assembly. You will all be active rebels or passive permitters of iniquity—all willing to disintegrate the glorious old empire for the pleasure of Mr. Tim Healy and Dr. Sexton, together with the Clan-na-Gael and the rest of the 'patriots'—you will (not all, but some) be willing to upset society, destroy the feminine characteristics, and make yourselves slaves for the pleasure of a few noisy females, who want to rule where they cannot govern. And you shall all talk and pronounce and say what you will, and I will be as meek as a mouse and not break even a straw by

way of lance. And I am *very* glad that my dear arch foe will, and can, come, and I look upon it as a feather in my cap as big as a whole ostrich!

"So farewell. Rebel and suicide as you are, I bend my old head reverently before your pure and sincere nature.—The one righteous person, E. LYNN LINTON."

"Justin M'Carthy is coming, and that is a delight. The Moultons and the Laboucheres. We shall have a *fine* party—splendid! I am so glad."

The following quotation from a letter to her sister describes one of her rare visits in these later years to the theatre:—

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
21st April 1891.

"I went to see a play yesterday afternoon—for the first time for a year—almost a year. It was all in dumb show, *L'Enfant Prodigue*, and the male characters were dressed as *Pierrots* in white with chalked faces and scarlet clown lips. The first two acts were very good; the first amusing, the second interesting. The last was pathetic to such an extent that I *sobbed*—sobbed over the wonderful acting without words, of whitewashed faces and clown-painted mouths! It was marvellously done. The suitable expression given to these mask-like faces was simply marvellous."

In July she paid another visit to the old Cumberland haunts in company with the Gedges. Lowwood on Windermere was made their base, from which the old familiar places were re-discovered, and old memories revived.

It was twenty-six years since she had seen Brantwood; and Ruskin, hearing that she was in the neighbourhood, invited her to visit him in her old home on Coniston. But she could not bring herself to re-open what had been so painful a chapter in her life, and excused herself. The associations were still too poignant, and the pages shut down had better remain so.

It was in the following year (1892) that I had the good

fortune to make the acquaintance of Mrs. Lynn Linton. Our first meeting was at the table-d'hôte of the Raven Hotel, Droitwich. For some years she had been much troubled with rheumatism, and did a yearly "cure," now abroad at Royat or Spa, now nearer home at Llanwrtydd Wells, Harrogate, Gilsland Spa, or Droitwich.

I had heard that the celebrated novelist was expected, and recognised her at once in the handsome and somewhat portly lady with the strong but tender mouth, the curiously protruding eyes, half concealed by huge spectacles, and the upright carriage of one who knew that she was a "somebody." She sat immediately opposite to us at table, and carried on an animated conversation with Sir Reginald M——, one of the handsomest old men in London, on her right, and with a well-known judge at the Dublin Horse Show, on her left. I longed to listen to what was evidently excellent talk, but my next-door neighbour was not at the dinner-table only to dine, and I was called on to do my part. Our conversation dealt with magazines, books, editors, and kindred subjects; and, as it turned out, scraps of it floated across the narrow table to ears which, their owner often told me afterwards, could hear two conversations at once.

As we filed out after dinner, I felt a touch upon my arm, and heard a never-to-be-forgotten voice saying—

"Are you one of us? You must bring your wife to my room and have a talk."

It was thus that she insisted on the free-masonry of literature—even with one of the humblest of her fellows.

What talks of books we had with her, in her bed-sitting-room, during those three great weeks, and how we enjoyed ourselves over the vagaries of our hotel companions.

Here are a few notes of these early conversations, which chance has preserved.

She did not deny the existence of God; but the goodness of a Creator, who permits so much suffering, was inexplicable. The old Olympian religions seemed to her much more logical than Christianity. Morality she believed to be conditional, and largely dependent upon longitude and latitude.

The resurrection and immortality of the body was to her inconceivable. If immortal, at what stage of life is the body revived in the next world? One changes so entirely from twenty to forty, from forty to seventy.

If God sympathises with us, He must be always suffering, and this is inconceivable in One who is all-powerful.

The most exquisite thing in the world is the threefold love of father, mother, and child. There is nothing real but love. And what a mystery this love is! Why do you love one whom another passes by unnoticed?

She loathed girls who study the nude in mixed classes. This deliberate immodesty is far worse than the rashness with which a girl goes astray on the impulse of the moment. Girls should be brought up *most* strictly, and not given a chance of roving. The mothers must not trust what they say, but must watch for themselves.

Middle-aged men are more dangerous to innocence than young men.

A European war would be a blessing, as it must be succeeded by a long peace and lessen the taxation of the people.

She saw no reason to suppose that people had a further existence, but inveighed against those who believed they had immortal souls, yet spent their whole lives in the pursuit of a golf ball.

Nothing is so comforting as the inexorable law of nature.

(In a letter of this year I find her enlarging on the same subject. She writes, "I find such calming power in the acceptance of inexorable law. No personality tortures us—no evil fate—no capricious act and deed of voluntary malice or of voluntary chastisement, but the law by which, when an insect lays its eggs in the bark of an oak tree we have an oak-gall, when we pass through the country of snakes and mosquitoes we get stung and bitten. Oh, the grand patience that comes with that conviction! This acceptance of the inevitable is *my* salvation!")

Children are a luxury, and to have too many of them is as bad as any other form of intemperance.

It is wrong to take advantage of a man's ignorance to

buy a thing from him at less than its proper value; it is as wrong as for an army to pillage a town. But the present state of civilisation has so cultivated feelings of abstract pity that, where we may not pillage a community, we may use our superior knowledge to best an individual in the way of business.

On the other hand, trade would be at a standstill if the laws of Christianity were strictly observed.

Mohammedanism has had more influence on the world than Christianity.

How can it matter by what name we call upon God? If a child is crying in the dark, does the mother refuse to go to it because it is calling "Nurse"?

It is permissible to tell lies in response to a question which the questioner has no right to put, and where to refuse to answer would serve the questioner's turn. It is one of the great problems of life to gauge the relative importance of the great rules of life and, where two seem to clash, promptly to recognise which is paramount.

Her talk was always stimulating and suggestive, and forced one out of emptiness of phrases. It bustled one's brains, and her companions found their mental bullion turned by magic into current coin. She welcomed courteous dissent, and was ever as ready to learn as she was to teach. Sometimes I think she deliberately contradicted, as one knocks at a door "*pour savoir s'il y a quelqu'un à la maison.*" She liked to put you on your mettle and see what you were made of.

This she did with those who professed to think at all. With such she was like an eagle in her keenness. The one drawback was that most other conversation, after hers, seemed intolerably flat and insipid. It was like a return to penny nap after a visit to Monte Carlo. With those not mentally equipped she was just a kindly, gracious "old tabby," as she often called herself, and as gentle and womanly as she had, but just before, been vivid and assertive.

Early this year, Mrs. Gulie Moss, an enthusiastic admirer of Mrs. Linton's work, had obtained permission from Messrs. Chatto & Windus and Messrs. Hurst & Blackett to make extracts from those novels of hers of which they held the

copyrights. She considered it a misfortune that much of Mrs. Linton's best thought was lost to those who had neither the time nor the inclination to read fiction. She therefore set herself to bring together the "most brilliant findings in social and religious subjects" scattered throughout the novels, and published them in a handbook, entitled *Free Shooting*.

To say that Mrs. Linton was astonished at the compliment thus paid to her writings is to understate the facts. She was staggered at the unexpected honour. That she did a good day's work and created a passing interest with it she was aware, but that anybody should look upon it as more than journeyman's labour was something quite beyond her modest estimate.

This was her letter of thanks for an advance copy of the little volume:—

E. L. L. TO MRS. GULIE MOSS.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
21st May 1892.

"DEAR MADAM,—I was never more surprised in the whole of my long life than when I received yesterday from the publishers the pretty-looking book you have edited. To say that I am gratified is to say nothing. Do you not know the strong chaotic kind of gratitude one has when a great honour, a great grace, comes quite unexpectedly from a hitherto unknown and unsuspected source? It is overwhelming, and beggars one of words by the very force of its own wealth.

"If you knew me personally, you would see how little of the author I have in me. I write what I believe, and what I ardently want to see others accept and live by; but when that is done I pass on and take up something else. I never look back on what I have written, and never remember what has been said for or against me—save in the case of one or two cutting insults, which I still burn to avenge if I could!

"I do not 'carry my books' with me expecting others to have read them, so that, when a thing of this stupendous honour is done me, I am lost in part amazement and part pleasure so great as to be almost pain. I do not know how to thank you—I cannot! What can I do to show my gratitude? I have no house to ask you to come and stay in. I live in a

small apartment in these Mansions, and have no spare room at all—only my own bedroom and sitting-room. But if you come to London you would come to dine with me, which is all the hospitality I can show! I was once at Falmouth for the summer. . . . Those were the days when I could *walk* and scramble and enjoy the country and botanise, and when I was still in the full vigour of an exceptionally vigorous womanhood. It must be eighteen or twenty years ago. If I had as much courage as a mouse, I would go again, but I should break my heart over the difference between then and now—between a walk of ten or twelve miles taken as a matter of course, and a crawl of a mile or so with frequent stoppages and discomfort of breathing. But indeed I should like to shake your hand and look into your face! Perhaps a few tears would gather into my eyes—they come soon under the stress of emotion—but they would be clear enough to look at you with grateful affection, as I hope indeed some day they may! Thank you again!—Most sincerely yours, and gratefully, E. LYNN LINTON."

In June she again took her courage in her hands and journeyed to Ireland, this time to Belfast, where she stayed with Mr. (now Sir) James Henderson[1] at Oakley House, Windsor Park.

Through his influence she was enabled to be present at the monster Unionist meeting, to which no other lady was admitted.

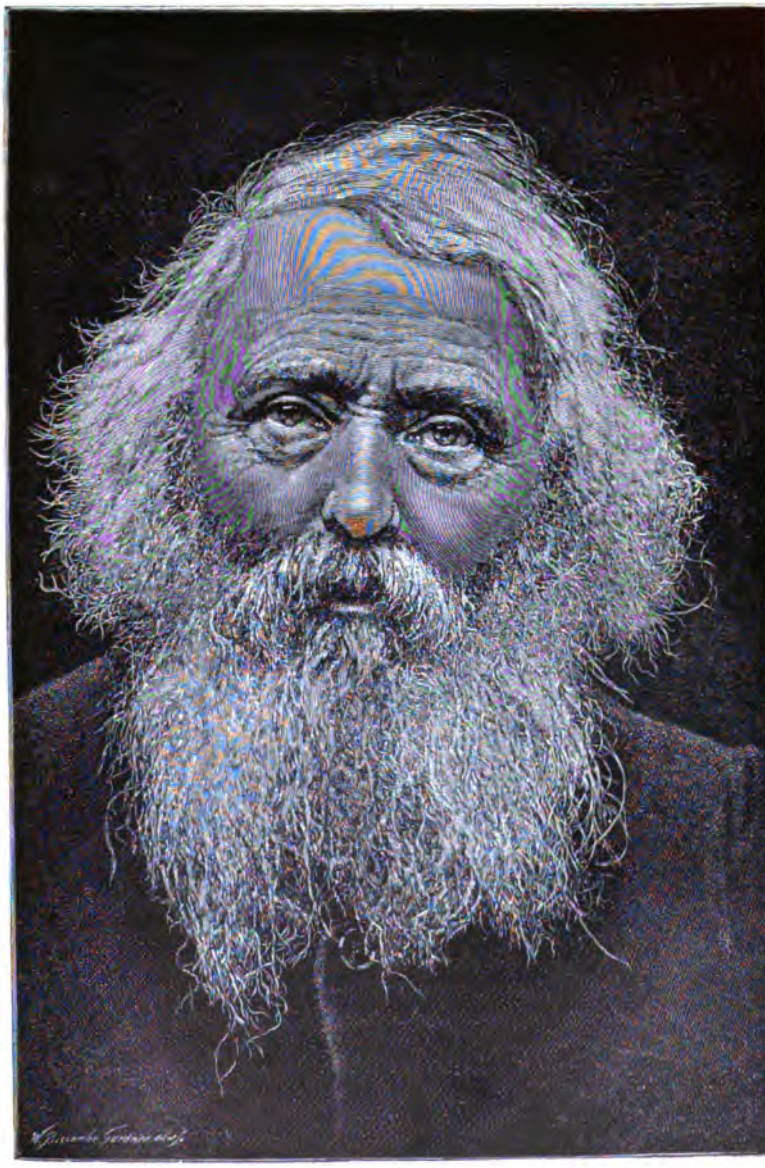
The outcome of this visit was her little book *About Ulster*, published this year by Messrs. Methuen & Co. Amongst other letters it called forth one from Mr. Linton, which I give as a good example of the voluminous correspondence carried on between husband and wife until the death of the former in 1897.

W. J. LINTON TO E. L. L.

"P.O. BOX 1139, NEWHAVEN, CONN.,
22nd July 1892.

"DEAREST LIZZIE,—Glad enough I was to get your Enniskillen letter, for it had seemed a long time since one of

[1] Lord Mayor of Belfast in 1898.



WILLIAM JAMES LINTON

IN OLD AGE

FROM THE ENGRAVING BY MR. W. BISCOMBE GARDNER

By permission of the Proprietors of the "English Illustrated Magazine"

your ever-welcome letters had brightened me. You are a wonderful woman, and, spite of fatigue and discomfort, I can well understand how you must have enjoyed your Irish exploit, which I almost envy you. I wish indeed I could have been with you, for I have lost no interest in that sad old Irish business, holding as ever against the iniquity of even a much moderated *land* system, though I do not believe in the redemption of Ireland by any parliament of Parnell's and Healy's, or understand the possibility of an Irish separate nationality. Where Duffy failed, no Dillon or O'Brien has a chance of success. I am looking anxiously for the result of the elections, hoping even yet for Gladstone's defeat, fairly sure, however, that though he may come into 'power' he will be powerless to work his will.

"Writing of Duffy, do you recollect (perhaps not) that after years of work for the *Irish Nation*, I left it with hard words to Duffy on Mazzini's account? It was a bitter quarrel, hardly to be forgiven in a man's life; but when I was last in England I was surprised by a very friendly letter from him, then at Nice, a letter which spoke much for the largeness and generosity of the man's nature, and gave me great pleasure. Of course I answered him in the same spirit. Lately he has sent me his *Conversations with Carlyle*, taking opportunities to speak of me there with the same heartiness. It *is* pleasant, dear Liz! to find in one's old days that one's better parts are recollected instead of the worst.

"Your book is very good, well argued and timely. I have not written for years on Ireland. My last, anti-Gladstone, was in letters to the *Newcastle Chronicle*, and some brevities have found place in the *New York Nation*. But I can only repeat myself, and have perhaps already written too much. I bate no jot of the hope of the future of early dreaming, but I know how much I ante-dated it. My *ultima verba* are probably in *European Republicans, Recollections of Mazzini and his Friends*, which Lawrence & Bullen will bring out this 'fall,' if they do not want more ameliorations than my ill-nature will submit to.

"So you dream of the old lover! Was it not all a dream? Beloved! One looks back on life as if it were all no more than that—the long seventy, the long eighty years only dreams of the night. I can recollect in young hours speculating whether the whole of a life were any more than

a long dream, and then hoping for the other-world awakening. Only another phantasy. Now I am content that I can be alive and cheerful and trust the Lord of the past to care for the future, mine included. What matters it? It seems to me enough to live in good repute, and to have still so much of love—the most, dear love, from you. Thank God for memory.—Your old lover, your true, loving friend,

"W. J. LINTON."

That she had to pay for her jaunt to Ireland is plain from the following extract from a letter to Mrs. Campbell Praed, written from Gilsland Spa: "For myself, I am at a queer, roughish, provincial, and eminently *one-horse place*—all but crippled with rheumatism, scarce able to stand upright for my poor old agonised back, scarce able to go hobbling and tripping downstairs or up, for my poor aching old knees. My stay in Ireland, and then my dear Keswick, has done for me, till I get set to rights by the sulphur waters here. I hope soon to be made strong and as good as new.

"I have no news naturally that would interest you. I had a *lovely* time in Ireland with one of the Irish landlords whose name is Anathema Maranatha[1] to the English Liberal; and I wrote a little book about Ulster after I had been at the Belfast Convention and taken *Ulsteria* badly. But I will not bother you with the views you do not and cannot share. If you went over to Ireland and saw with your own soft eyes, you would come back 'converted,' having found salvation as I have done!"

[1] Mrs. Linton is, of course, here guilty of a vulgar error.—G. S. L.

CHAPTER XXI

1893–1895

THE year 1893 found Mrs. Linton still at war with the Advancing Woman. Ever quick to recognise the weak points in the armour of her adversaries, and ever brilliant, swift, and fearless in attack, year by year she fought her arduous fight, to the satisfaction of editors who kept their arenas sanded for the combatants on this side or that. Year after year she entered the lists and never knew herself beaten. And now in the seventy-first year of her age she buckled on her armour for a prolonged campaign.

This time her field of operations was the *Lady's Pictorial* and in her novel, *The One too Many*, she vigorously and, it must be confessed, somewhat recklessly made war against Girton and all its works. It had become with her almost an obsession that the feminine character taken collectively was in a state of progressive "worsement."

Much, no doubt, that she wrote was true and right, and it was brilliantly set down. Unfortunately, she damaged her case by betraying a good deal of ignorance concerning the real mode of existence obtaining among those whom she indicted. She further weakened her argument by allowing the "dear, sweet, old-fashioned girl," whom she places in juxtaposition to the by no means sweet "girl graduates," to make shipwreck of her life and end her existence in a pond!

Notwithstanding these blemishes — partly, no doubt, because of them—the story attracted considerable attention, and when, in the following year, it was published in book form, with the somewhat provocative inscription, "To

the sweet girls still left among us, who have no part in the new revolt, but are content to be dutiful, innocent, and sheltered," the champions on the other side took the field.

Here is one of the skirmishes, in which, I am bound to say, Mrs. Linton seems to me to have been worsted.

LETTER FROM A GIRTON GIRL TO THE EDITOR OF THE "LADY'S PICTORIAL."

"DEAR SIR,—As a constant subscriber for many years to your paper, and as a late student of Girton College, I write to protest against the caricature of Girton students contained in the story you have been publishing, called *The One too Many*. I left Girton ten years ago, and since then I have kept closely in touch with college life and college students, and I state without any hesitation and without any reservation, that such women as are described in your story are unknown at Girton. I have never met such characters, I have never heard such conversation as theirs, either in college or out of it, and I firmly believe you will never find any one who has.

"It is evident, of course, that the writer of the story can have had little or no acquaintance with Girton or Cambridge women-students.

"As an example of her ignorance of facts of common knowledge, she continually writes of 'Girton B.A.'s' and of 'Girton prize-girls.' But where ignorance in this case matters little, the author's statements as to the language and habits (I refer to the smoking and constant taking of stimulants indulged in by these 'Girton B.A.'s') are calculated to create very great and unjust prejudice in the minds of those who read your paper, and who, knowing nothing of the manner and life of university women, cannot judge for themselves of the truth or falsehood of the descriptions.

"Many foolish and ridiculous attacks on women university students are published from time to time, but I believe that this story, *The One too Many*, stands alone for its offensive pictures of the so-called results of Girton training and education.

"To justify the language I have used, I have only to

remind you that of the 'Girton B.A.'s' in the story, one marries a policeman, having first nursed him through an illness and then proposed to him; one flirts outrageously with a married man in the presence of his wife, the intimate friend of her 'pal' who marries the policeman; the third constantly advocates suicide, and is consequently the indirect cause of the heroine's death by her own hand. All drink, smoke, swear, use vulgar language, and are represented as knowing and talking about unfitting subjects.

"And the writer does not merely indulge in generalities, and say, 'These *will be* the results of the higher education of women.'

"She takes an existing and well-known university college and three representatives of that college, and, after painting them in the most forbidding colours, she has the audacity to say—

"'These *are* the results of the training given at Girton College; these *are* the results of the higher education of women.'

"Every one knows how strong some authors' prejudices are, but I should like to ask the following questions:—

"(1) Has the author of *The One too Many* ever met any Girton student who in the least resembles any one of her three 'Girton B.A.'s'?

"(2) If not, can it be considered fair to depict purely imaginary and entirely offensive characters as embodying the results of the training and teaching given at a well-known and existing institution?

"I write also to you as editor to protest against such a story as *The One too Many* being allowed a place in a ladies' paper of the standing which yours occupies. The *Lady's Pictorial* on the one page stabs us in this way, and on the next gives photographs and details of training and careers such as the editor would seem, by implication, to believe will lead to the most disastrous results.

"I know by experience that a university scholarship or higher examination list is no sooner published than the successful candidates are besieged by applications for their portraits, and their successes are chronicled in your paper as worthy of imitation in others.—I am, yours faithfully,

"A Late Student of Girton College,
Cambridge."

E. L. L. TO THE EDITOR OF THE "LADY'S PICTORIAL."

"DEAR SIR,—I am sorry that you should have been in any way troubled through me or my work; sorry, too, that I have offended others by what I have written. I am afraid, though, that the students at Girton, etc., will not be able to find a law that shall prevent their coming into the sphere of fiction and its uses. As the old Laura Matildas, the Blue-stockings, the fine ladies with spleen and vapours, the dull drudges who 'suckled fools and chronicled small beer,' the flirts, hoydens, gamblers, horsey women—in short, the whole list of foils to the ideal—have been used in fiction, so will the newer developments of womanhood, whether the setting be Girton or Newnham, a London newspaper office or a political platform.

"I wanted a link between four girls, and the best that occurred to me was a collegiate friendship. And I wanted to show that intellectual training may exist with (1) absence of womanliness, though in this character are many of the more virile virtues, as in Effie; with (2) want of charm, as in Carrie; with (3) want of mental health and common sense, as in Laura; with (4) want of right feeling, as in Julia. If your correspondent maintains that the higher education changes the elemental qualities of character, and that, given such natures and temperaments as I have described, a knowledge of classics and mathematics will alter them, I think she is wrong. If she maintains that no girl-graduate smokes, drinks more than is good for her, talks slang, swears, or knows more of the darker secrets of human life than is fitting, I *know* she is wrong. If she thinks that no girl of this higher education would come between husband and wife, on the plea of her own greater fitness to understand and companion him, I *know* there, too, that she is wrong. And if she hopes to make the very name of Girton sacred, so that it shall not be employed as a background in fiction, save under conditions of commendation, I fear she will miss her mark as completely as she has done in her belief that the moral nature of women is, or can be, changed by intellectual acquirement.

"But really, is not your correspondent a little too hasty in thus taking up the cudgels for the honour of a place which

is only named as a locality and is not attempted to be described? Imagine any Cambridge man writing such a letter of an author who had made four fops, or *roués*, or forgers, or what not, former 'Varsity men! It is this ultra-sensitiveness of the Advanced Women under the slightest and most good-natured ridicule which lays them open to worse censure than mine. If they want to be treated with the quasi-mystic and poetic respect of the days of chivalry, when they were the property of the men of the family, and their honour was those men's care, they must keep out of harm's way and not come into the open to fight with men, and like men, themselves. They cannot expect to have the good of both states—the immunity from censure belonging to the claustral life, and the good things picked up in the scrimmage of an active and public one. In my own person I have to submit to abuse of a very broad kind if I write what chances to offend an unknown adversary; yet my worst offence is to make caps that fit, and to hit the eyes of unseen Efreets with a few random date stones; for I write only of types which mean no one in particular. When your correspondent has been as well abused as I have been, subjected to indecent and foul-mouthed anonymous letters *from women* as I continually am, accused of faults which, if true, would ruin any one's claims to be considered an honest or honourable member of society—all for the sin of preferring the more modest and womanly type to the noisy, the undutiful, and the unsexed—then perhaps she will become less sensitive in the matter of a place taken as a setting for certain characters in fiction, none of which is individual or photographic.

"All the same, I am sorry if I have annoyed any one, and very sorry to have given you uneasiness, or to have cast the smallest shade over the pages of the *Lady's Pictorial*.—Faithfully yours,

"E. LYNN LINTON."

Mrs. Linton was soon made aware that the terms of her dedication were misleading. She had intended that the Girton girls should stand as a warning, but she had not intended that her hapless heroine should stand as a pattern.

In the following reply to a lady, who had courteously pointed out the discrepancy, she explains the position:—

E. L. L. TO MISS ALYCE BAGRAM.

"*January* 1894.

"DEAR MISS BAGRAM,—I did not mean 'Moira' to be my idea of a perfect girl. I would not be so foolish as to make a weak, pathetic, crushed, and invertebrate creature like that an ideal. I wanted to show her as ruined, bruised, and slain by circumstances—and by the impulse of the moment. I have given a wrong *note*. Because I inscribed the book to all nice girls, I had no thought that any one would take Moira to be one, but that they would take the Girton girls as the thing to avoid. I must say this — the incapacity for fair judgment in the ordinary woman is the most distressing thing about her. She takes one view, and not angels themselves can make her accept another. But I quite acknowledge my own blindness in giving a wrong impulse by the dedication. No! I cannot make a sequel.

"I a member of the Pioneer Club? By no means. Mrs. —— I know slightly. Don't become an up-to-date girl. I am sure you are very sweet and ingenuous now, but if you join the advanced school you will lose all your intrinsic charm. Do you think I want you to be yea-nay little pinafore misses? No! but I want you to have respect for authority, and reverence for your parents, and love for men who are worthy of love—all the sweet womanly virtues, which make woman half divine, and the true antiseptic of society. You don't find these qualities in the Heavenly Twins, Yellow Asters, and all the new women who set themselves to blaspheme nature and God and good.

"I am not hard to girls—only to the new woman I am implacable. All the girls I know like me and I love them.—Very sincerely yours, E. LYNN LINTON."

The present seems a suitable opportunity for presenting to my readers the reminiscences of Mrs. Linton, with which Miss Beatrice Harraden has been kind enough to favour me. This delightful account of the friendship of the old "Viking," whose work was well-nigh finished, with the young "B.A.," whose work was but lately begun, is peculiarly apposite here, illustrating as it does the contest that was continually going on in Mrs. Linton between affection for the individual and

disapproval of the type—a contest in which the personal feeling was always in the end victorious.

NOTE BY MISS BEATRICE HARRADEN.

"At the time of dear Mrs. Linton's death I wrote in the *Bookman* a short account of my first meeting with her, and the very precious friendship which arose out of it. I could of course add considerably to it, but the main point on which I could enlarge is the persistency of her robust and stimulating influence on the character of those whom she loved and left. It is just a year[1] since she passed away from us, and I feel more than ever the abiding force of her strong individuality. She was herself so gallant and brave, that it would seem disloyalty to her memory not to make the attempt to be brave and gallant oneself, under any circumstances whatsoever. She was most generous about other people's work, and her praise and encouragement were always bracing. You felt, after reading one of her kind letters, that you must 'pull yourself together' to justify what she had so generously said of you. I think that all her friends must have felt that. She will always remain, to quote her own words to me, 'as a silver trumpet heartening to the strife.' Perhaps I have felt this all the more because she never failed, during my many months of illness, to encourage and stimulate me to get better. 'You will recover your health and do good work, and I shall live to be proud of my little dear,' she wrote constantly. She had the tenderest heart imaginable, and I know she had a very special tender love for me. Our friendship was broken into partly by my absence abroad; and partly by differences of feeling and method and opinion, but she always loved me, and when we met again after two or three years' separation, she was still 'my Viking lady,' and I was still her 'little B.A.' Even at the risk of appearing to be sentimental, I dwell with lingering emphasis on this gentler side of her character, because it is as true of her as the pugilistic side. She took me into her heart from the onset, and though she

[1] This was written in the summer of 1899.—G. S. L.

distinctly gave me to understand that she did not approve of me—for I had committed the terrible sin of receiving a modern young woman's education—yet she was prepared to overlook a great deal because she loved me. She writes once—

"'In spite of all your wicked aberrations from Mrs. Partington's ideas of the limit to which the Atlantic should flow, I love you, and always have done, and always shall do. I never let any abstract ideas of what is fitting or the reverse touch a hair of the head of the person. I fight the idea, but when it comes to the creature's self, I love *quand même*.—My B.A.'s friend and loving old VIKING.'

"At an early stage of our friendship she gave me an old brooch which she had had for forty years, and which had been given to her at the beginning of her own literary career; and later on she told me that she had left me her writing-table—godmother's gifts, she called them—for my own literary christening. She took the greatest interest in my accepted and rejected MSS.—generally rejected in those days; but she never once offered to help me to place any story, and never once gave me any letter of introduction to any editor. I have since thought this all the more strange, because I hear what immense trouble in that way she took for others. I suppose she thought that it was better if possible to fight one's battle alone. But she sent me out to it full of hope and courage, and buoyed up with the consciousness that she believed in me. And that is the healthiest kind of help. Looking back now I realise how much I owe to her in so many ways quite apart from love and friendship. Herself a veteran writer, she took myself, a young beginner, into her life *on equal terms*. She opened her home to me at once, and I was free to come and go and take my part in her Saturday afternoons, where I made many delightful friendships—also her gift to me, which will last me all my life. If any specially interesting people came, she generally managed that I should speak with them, and she never failed to tell them that I had taken my B.A. degree at the London University, and yet had had the audacity to seek her friendship, and that I was intending to become a

successful authoress. 'And she will be,' she always added. I tell all this merely to show how generous-minded and open-hearted she was. But the greatest pleasure and interest of those afternoons was when she got into discussion with any one. She would become very angry and emphatic at times, but I never thought she lost her delicate sense of courtesy and fine sensitiveness. I have seen people show signs of incipient rudeness to her over some hot discussion, and then the sound of her singularly sweet voice restored them to themselves. But of course to me the greatest pleasure of all was to get her alone, and when she was in a non-combative mood; when the much-vexed question of the modern young woman was put aside for the time, and the inferiority of woman to man was allowed to be in abeyance for the moment; when examinations and the woman's suffrage and the bicycle and other 'abhorrences' were safely slumbering. Then and then only one learnt to know the real Mrs. Lynn Linton. Working diligently at her embroidery, she would speak of her girlhood's troubles and her passionate desire and attempts to educate herself. Then one heard the story of her own emancipation from a close-pressing environment; the story of her hard work and struggles in London; of her successes, disappointments, failures; of her friendships and disillusions; of her strong belief in the good of human nature, and her robust delight in life and everything which life had to offer of its best and truest. And it was not all listening either, for Mrs. Linton was ever most uninsistent—if I may use that word—about herself. And that too was a lesson to be learnt from her. So we sat and talked together, now of her past life and present, now of my young life, my past and present; and we spoke of religion and philosophy and languages, and sometimes ended up with an ode from Horace or a passage from Homer. And once or twice she read to me. Her favourite sonnet from Shakespeare was, 'When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes.' And once she told me the story of her unsuitable marriage. The last real talk I had with her was at the Royal Academy Exhibition. I had not seen her for quite three years, and she was delighted to find me looking so well again. And we sat together hand in hand

and renewed old times. She spoke of her projects and asked me about mine, and she drifted on to the subject of religion. I could see that her ideas had undergone a change, and that her tone had become distinctly conventional. I saw her again at Mrs. Hartley's, and again at the Authors' dinner. We stood together in the reception room for some time afterwards, she chatting now with this person now with that, but affectionately holding my hand throughout. One of her friends came up, and he said, 'I like to see you both together, the old and the young authoresses. You've always been friends, haven't you?' 'Yes,' she answered, 'in spite of everything,' and she repeated the old joke about my college career and my other wicked sins, and we both went away smiling. I saw her once again at Queen Anne's Mansions, and she was especially gentle and tender, but I, and others who knew her much better than I did, thought she seemed detached and impersonal. This detachment from her old friends was thought to have been growing on her for some time ; but I believe people did not realise that she was full of years, and therefore subject to the limitations of sentiment and sensitiveness which old age invariably brings. It was not that she *cared* less, but that she *felt* less. But as no one ever realised that she was nearly seventy-seven, no one ever allowed her the advantage or disadvantage of being seventy-seven years of age. To me she always seemed a strong-brained, strong-framed woman of about fifty. I am sure all who cared for Mrs. Linton must be comforted to know that in the closing days of her life she had her heart's darling by her side, that faithful and gracious friend who had never failed her once, Beatrice Hertz-Hartley.

"So my dear old Viking passed away to her rest after her stormy days of stress and strife. She died as she had lived—the very soul of honour. Honourable, self-respecting, generous, just, and high-minded, these are some of the words which would rise up in our minds if we were asked to describe her. And she was naturally affectionate, and I believe craved above all things to be loved.

"All her friends find a difficulty in choosing any letters received from her which would be suitable for the outside

world of readers. Her letters were always so full of praise and appreciation and kindly encouragement, that it would be quite impossible to print the majority of them. And all I can hope to do is to string together a few extracts and to trust to the understanding and indulgence of the readers of this volume to realise that I give these passages against my own private feelings of natural reserve, for the simple sake of illustrating Mrs. Lynn Linton's character.

"I had sent her a Christmas card in the form of a little prose greeting, and this was her answer—

"'QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
24th December 1888.

"'And the lady, sitting alone in her high chamber—alone and sorrowful—sat long into the night, thinking of many things. From the far distant past of her own childhood and her vigorous youth, rose the ghosts of dead hopes, of slain joys, of beautiful illusions murdered by the cruel hands of truth, of lost loves, of friends for ever parted—all those grey-clad phantoms, born of time and experience, which replace in age the rosy clouds of youth. The world seemed very silent, very sad, and life looked purposeless and dreary—merely a retrospect now with no foothold on the present—when suddenly there stole on the stagnant air a low and tender melody.

"'It came from nowhere. It was not from the Christmas waits outside; it was not from any indweller in the high house; it was not here nor there, but everywhere—something that pervaded the whole atmosphere like a subtle perfume, and turned what had been stillness to exquisite harmony. And with the music came a faint light—at first diffused, like the light of the dawn, then gathering into one point like the morning star before the sun has risen. And this light, slowly concentrating itself, took a form and shape, and in it the lady saw the face of a little black-haired, bright-eyed girl. . . . Then she knew that her life, though solitary, was not in the past, but still in the present and the future, and that to her had come this new sweet love—this new and golden link—who was to be as her spiritual child, carrying on her own work to nobler and higher issues. She knew that the music was this child's message for this dark Christmas time, and that it was made by the Spirit of Love himself.'

"The following two letters were written after Mrs. Linton had received copies of *Blackwood's Magazine* containing two of my little stories:—

"'THE WHITE HART HOTEL, HARROGATE,
YORKS, *28th July*.

"'DEAREST LITTLE B.A.,—Your story is lovely, and I am so glad your friendly editor gave it the place of honour it so well deserved! You have now conquered all your difficulties, sweet shaggy pate, barring those of health, which the happiness of success should greatly help. For I will not have you say that you do not care for your success. That is high treason against yourself and your friends, especially against me, who take a mother's interest in your career, and feel as proud of you as if you were my own creation!

"'When you next write to Mr. Blackwood, give him my thanks and best regards for the mag., and tell him I congratulate him on having the first claim to your best work, and love him for the patient faith he had in you through all your "forsaken time." You have justified him, darling. Now go on and do still better—hitch *your* waggon to the stars, and hey! for the top of the tree! . . . Go on, go on, go on. YOUR VIKING.'

"'IVY PORCH COTTAGE, HOLMWOOD COMMON,
DORKING, *29th April* 1892.

"'DEAREST LITTLE B.A.,—That most pathetic, dainty, graceful little *cameo* has been sent me. Thank you, my dear, for the mag. (as of course it was you who told Blackwood to send it), and for the great pleasure the reading of your story has given me. It is charming—as sweet and pure as the fairest lily, and yet so true and yet so poetic withal! It is an excellent bit of work, and something to be proud of. I cannot tell you how much I like it. The treatment is so fresh and so scholarly—so dainty and so strong. It is by far the best bit of work I have read for a long time—and the best you have done that I know of.

"'I have finished my own fiery thunderbolt, so now if B.A. wants to come down one afternoon we will have a leisure time together. Bee and the children are just lovely.—B.A.'s loving and proud old VIKING.'

"I do not care to print the letter which she generously wrote on the publication of my first book; but the following is the answer to one of my letters in which I enclosed a few of the press notices:—

"'Q. A. M., *23rd March.*

"'DEAREST CHILD,—These criticisms have given me intense pleasure. It is exactly what I think of the book and what all who understand good work must think of it. It now only remains for my child to live wisely and do more splendid work. You have the ball at your foot, B.A. beloved! and with the resolve, aided by common sense, you will regain your health and strength and mental serenity. Go on and prosper, and when I am dead I will come and spiritually kiss your fuzzy little head.—Ever your loving old

"'VIKING LADY.'

"'c/o R. FELKIN, ESQ., MERRIDALE GROVE, WOLVERHAMPTON, *4th April.*

"'DEAREST LITTLE B.A.,—I am so very, very glad about your book, darling. It is so worthy of you, and its success is so worthy of it! I have heard it much spoken of, and you may be sure I did not damn it with faint praise nor try to belittle it with censure. It is a real book, dear, and must and shall be your springboard to health and happiness and grand success.'

"Then later on we appear to have had some falling out. She had written a new book against the modern young woman.[1] It was so full of the most absurd and unseemly misrepresentations, that my blood was up, and I was much tempted to write a letter to the *Lady's Pictorial*, where many indignant remonstrances were appearing. However, I was given to understand that she hoped I would not write against her, and I contented myself with sending the following few lines to her personally. She was vexed with them, and a coolness sprang up between us:—

"'5 CANON PLACE, HAMPSTEAD HEATH, N.W.

"'DEAREST VIKING,—Of course you know how I should be likely to feel on the subject; indeed, I don't remember ever

[1] This was, of course, *The One too Many*.—G. S. L.

having been so hurt. We are all smarting, we young women of the day, of whom you think so badly, for I range myself on their side naturally, being one of them myself and having had so many of them as comrades and friends. And if any one does know about them, surely I do, having been at three colleges. Well, there it all is, and your book will represent us as we are *not*. I have met some such characters as you describe, but they have been the untrained ones, not those who have been through their facings. I quite think that the modern young woman who has had no particular training loses her balance and goes off at a tangent; *but* steady work and ambition, and the desire to work out a career for herself, do not produce that description of modern young woman. That is a separate class having no point of contact with the trained and eager and brave souls whom I call my comrades and friends. I have met such people as you describe, but I have found them amongst the leisured and society-loving, not amongst the workers. To class the workers with them is an injustice.

"'My dear Viking, with always the same tenderness and love for you, and always claiming the same from you, I am, a very sorrowful and worked-up little B.A.'

"Here was part of her answer to a letter in which I had written complaining of the note of strong disapproval (quite unmerited, I think) which I had detected in one of her tirades against modern young women and myself—

"'If I am sorry for the results of what I think a wrongly directed education, that does not say that I am less than your *intensely* loving and *respectful* friend. I love and admire you as much as any one in the world does, but you know that I hold views different from yours on more things than one. Naturally, I think that from the heights of age I can see farther, I have a wider *back look* than you, and I can therefore see more plainly both tendencies and results. I never mean to be other to you than (1) as a silver trumpet heartening to the strife, (2) as a down cushion where weary and sore you may rest.—Your own VIKING.'

"It may easily be seen, from this and other allusions, that we were not always of accord; and indeed I may say that

one or two of our interviews were decidedly stormy. I know I was aggravating to her at times, especially when she was feeling 'worked-up' about the Woman's Movement. At times I was quite appalled, for her ideas and conceptions of young women were really appallingly false and unjust. At other times I was so indignant that I could not keep my temper. But we weathered all these storms, and, as I look back now, I seem to remember only all her wise and helpful words of guidance, intermingled with her angry denunciations, but yet capable of being singled out as real and right and noble exhortations, all making for the good.

"BEATRICE HARRADEN."

The occasion of the appearance of *The One too Many*, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, was felt to be a good opportunity for reviving the volume of essays on women, entitled *Ourselves*, which had originally been published in 1869. In it Mrs. Linton dealt "with the faults and follies of women, while leaving their virtues comparatively untouched." Her purpose was, as she explains in the preface, "to do the cause of women real good by showing where their weak points lie," feeling as she did "that if women could be brought to see their faults they would amend them." Messrs. Chatto & Windus were the publishers.

The record of the year 1893 shall close with a selection from the letters.

The first of these, thanking for a birthday present, is of the "small-beer" order, but none the less valuable as showing the tenderer side of her character:—

E. L. L. TO MISS ADA GEDGE.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
11th February 1893.

"Sometimes *little* things are beyond all price!

"Your needle-book is just as valuable to me as if it had been made of gold and silver and stuck about with diamonds and pearls. I have only a dirty, shabby, broken, dilapidated, tumbledown old fellow that makes me sick to see and use,

and this is just lovely; so, Ada, I thank you a *great* many times. I have had two lovely baskets of flowers given me that must have cost heaps of money, but this dear little yellow needlecase outweighs them both put together. I should like you to see one of poor Aunt Rose's[1] towels. Mother gave me four old ones—that I darned yesterday! It is *one mass* of darns—almost as much darning as material. Not that I care to do this to save a towel, but I had the most tender feeling for the poor dear old sister all the time I was doing it, as if she were there, and commending me in her surprised way that I should be so practical. She was so surprised that I could embroider, and I know she thought I was utterly inept as a housekeeper or caretaker of property. I shall darn the other three, and then keep them and use them very seldom. They will be a little proof that I am not merely a Bluestocking of the old traditions."

E. L. L. TO MRS. GULIE MOSS.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
10th March 1893.

" . . . It is hard for you to lie like this, unable to use your hands. That would be one of the worst trials to me, for I am a great needleworker, and love it. I do all sorts of things—*darn towels.* (Though I say it as shouldn't) I darn beautifully, and make the rent the occasion for something that is really elementary embroidery! and if I could not use my hands, I am afraid I should be less patient than the angelic person whose beauty of mind and of body both fills me with admiration and something more. I hope that you are read to by those you love—read to in that half-dramatic way which lifts up and accentuates the meaning, and is not too like a private lecture. That is an art so good to possess! If dramatic people are too broad, too coarse, they ought to be on a stage at a distance, with accessories to excuse and accompany the exaggeration. Close at hand it is too overpowering. And then there are others who read without any emphasis at all, merely minding their stops. Rice without salt or sugar has more flavour than their flat-voiced interpretation. On the other hand,

[1] Mrs. Murray, who died in 1890.

you do not want your bread covered with pepper and mustard.

"I wonder if you get the grand consolation I get when evil days are on me, of consciousness of law. You are suffering, sweet woman, from some probably unknown cause, which yet is as absolute in its effects as that fire would burn your hand if you thrust it inside the bars. If science can find a remedy—a counter-agent—well and good. If not, there is no use in knocking your head against a stone wall or praying into the void. Patience is the only dignified attitude. 'Wearying heaven with prayers' that are not answered may comfort some, and it does, but to me it would be more maddening than comforting to ask an Almighty Power to help and not to be answered! Then comes in the attitude of submission, unquestioning, unreasoning, full of faith—'If I am not answered, God knows best.' Then if He knows best and gives or withholds at His own pleasure, where is the use of asking? Does He need to be *told* what is wanted? It is all such an illogical jumble! and to me the old Stoics' *pride* of endurance in silence and with dignity is so much grander and finer! But, all the same, let us fight our physical enemies inch by inch, and do what we can to overcome. I am in the grasp of that 'foul fiend' rheumatism, with whom I am having a tussle. I am almost lame, and when I get up from the chair, hobble along the first few steps bent half double. Then slowly and by degrees I become less of an ape and more of a human, and by the time I have gone a few hundred yards cease to hobble. But does it not take it out of my pride when, in the coffee-room, I go parrot-like from chairback to chairback, limping and hobbling as I go!"

At the beginning of June Mr. Herbert Spencer had sent her a presentation copy of the *Ethics* in recognition of the service she had rendered him in playing the part, as he expressed it, of "Grundyometer" to certain chapters which he fancied might shock the more susceptible. Fearing lest she might look upon this as a hint to her to review it, he had followed the present up with a note absolutely forbidding any such thing.

This was her reply—

E. L. L. TO MR. HERBERT SPENCER.

"GROVE HOTEL, SWANAGE,
June 1893.

"MY DEAR MR. SPENCER,—No one who knows anything about you could imagine you doing anything whatever to secure a press notice, still less from one so imperfectly educated as I am. Quite equal to your transcendent mental powers is your moral *straightness*, that lofty independence which contents itself with doing good work and leaving it to fructify by its own vitality. No man could be less of a popularity-hunter than you are. No man could have a higher moral standard. That is one reason why I, among so many, love and reverence you so deeply. For, to my way of thinking, the grandeur of the moral nature, that part of the intellect which deals with man as man, is quite as valuable as even epoch-making thought.

"I will send to the Mansions to have your book forwarded to me, and thank you, how many times? a thousand if you like! for the honour you have done me in giving it me. I have left London for the summer, *laus Deo!* and have come to the quietest, prettiest, most charming place you can imagine. The garden goes down to the seashore, and the flowers and trees and singing birds are all as fresh and fine and full as if we were in the heart of the country."

Early in August my wife and I had foregathered with her for a few days at Harrogate on our way north. I was at that time writing "Queer Stories" for *Truth*. The tragical plot of one just about to be published was, I believed, absolutely original and evolved from my inner consciousness. What, then, was my astonishment when in the course of conversation she told me a story of what had just happened in real life to one very near and dear to her—and with absolutely the same *motif*. My story was already in type, and on its publication I sent her a copy. This was her letter in acknowledgment—

E. L. L. TO G. S. LAYARD.

"NORTH TWYFORD, WINCHESTER,
26th August 1893.

" . . . Many thanks for the *Truth* and the Coincidence. The story is very well told, if I may say so without impertinence, and the coincidence is queer. To us with our limited vision, thoughts seem to be illimitable and infinite. I wonder if they are! if they are not bound by laws as exact as those which rule the—apparently unfixed and voluntary—winds, so that whenever the molecules of the brain are set to a certain pattern, the same thought must of necessity be produced? We see this and in part acknowledge it in the beginnings of savage consciousness. All over the world the same kind of flint implements are found. The same method of fashioning them revealed itself to the brains of all men. So of pottery, so of the earliest patterns in carving and engraving, so of the earliest ideas of religion, so of all things belonging to the cotyledonous state of men's minds. But when we advance in brain development we differentiate and multiply, and the strict line of likeness gets lost and confused. And then again every now and then come strange parallelisms which are not plagiarisms nor half-remembered echoes, but absolutely self-evolved in each brain alike. And I say again that thought seems to me *not* infinite in fact, though to all intents and purposes it is so to us, but that, like the remote chance of exactly the same hands being dealt at whist in the same room of a club card party, the thing is possible and does happen when the cards have got mixed, or the brain particles are set, in exactly the same fashion. I know that this reduces the thing to the flattest materialism, and disposes of all the dream of inspiration from without. . . .

" I have been learning by heart Sir Alfred Lyall's 'Retrospect.' It is as fine as any of Rudyard Kipling's, so is his 'Theology in Extremis'—so indeed are all his Indian poems, which are not sufficiently known.

" Well, dear, good-bye. Do you see any difference between the first page of this and the last three? I had forgotten my promise to write more legibly. The first page is a Borrioboolaga, but I maintain that the last three are superb. Best love to the dear Queen Eleanor.—Always my blessed people's affectionate friend, E. LYNN LINTON."

In December we had all been down with influenza on the top of other illness.

E. L. L. TO MRS. G. S. LAYARD.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
5th December 1893.

". . . It is just a cursed little bit of thorny road that we are all on—you and others. We shall get over it and come into the straighter, smoother path, and then we will snap our fingers at the trouble we have left behind us. For myself, I am so thankful that my heart never fails me! In the moment of greatest nervous exhaustion, when I can do absolutely nothing, I am not depressed. When I cannot fight off the malady, I just lie down quietly till I can get up again. I *never* lose heart. Life to me is so dear, so precious, so lovely! I want to live and work and love and admire, and see sunsets and flowers, and kiss sweet faces of dear friends, and watch the progress of events."

The year 1893 had seen some falling off in the quantity of her journalistic work. The weekly articles in the *Queen* had continued without interruption, but there had not been much besides. In 1894, however, the output was almost as large as ever. This was mainly due to her entering into an engagement to write a weekly article for the *St. James's Budget*, which had now been made independent of the *Gazette*, and was bidding for the suffrages of the readers of the illustrated weeklies.

Mr. Penderel-Brodhurst has been good enough to send me the following account of her connection with the paper which he so ably edited:—

NOTE BY MR. PENDEREL-BRODHURST.

"I first made the acquaintance of Mrs. Lynn Linton about 1888 at the house of Mr. Sidney Low, but it was not until years afterwards that I was so fortunate as to be admitted to her friendship. It was early in 1894 that I began to be in constant relations with her. She had then, for some years,

been at intervals a contributor to the *St. James's Gazette*, but latterly her contributions had almost ceased. Early in 1894, however, I asked her if she would write a weekly article for the *St. James's Budget*, which had latterly been made a separate publication, and of which I was editor. In an hour's chat in her little drawing-room at Queen Anne's Mansions we arranged the details, and she fell in readily with the scheme I had in my mind, making no objection to my reservation that she was not to write upon politics. This was the beginning of a long series of articles full of the old acuteness and incisiveness; full, too, of that tender kindliness, which shone through everything she wrote, when she was not pouring scorn and contempt upon the things and types she hated, and had taught so many others to hate. There is an idea that, in her later days, Mrs. Linton had lost her fire and vigour. But it is the eternal *cliché* of the hasty or ill-informed critic, that practitioners of the art of writing must necessarily grow feeble as they grow old. It assuredly was not so in this case. Since the days of *The Girl of the Period* and *Patricia Kemball*, there had no doubt been time for her point of view and the singularly direct and unmistakable way in which she enforced it to grow familiar. Her work had necessarily lost novelty, but it had not lost vigour. She had established a convention of her own, which educated people admired to the end; but because it was a convention, the easily fatigued modern palate was inclined to fancy that she always gave them the same dish. As a matter of fact, the essays she wrote for me —there must have been one hundred and fifty of them—were singularly varied in subject. As a contributor, Mrs. Lynn Linton was a delight. Always two articles ahead, her MS. arrived with perfect regularity. Lacking at first sight somewhat of legibility, it was really much more easily read than some handwritings which are apparently clearer.

"Mrs. Lynn Linton's personality was singularly vivifying. It was impossible to be dull or moody or over-anxious in her cheery presence. Her conversation was very different from what might have been expected from her writing. There was nothing about her that seemed in the least in keeping with the mordant phrases of *The Girl of the Period* and other of the papers which had won her fame as an essayist. The soft, gentle face, mobile to the last, was youthful despite the grey hair and the spectacles. She was an excellent talker,

full of interest in everything that was going on—full, too, of enthusiasm, when the conversation touched upon any subject in which she was especially interested. Her talk was essentially kindly, full of charity and tolerance. She never forgot a kindness or a courtesy. For any little thing that was done for her she was almost embarrassingly grateful. It is an abiding regret to me that I had no opportunity of accepting her warm invitation to visit her, with my wife, at Malvern. I always found it hard to realise her age, and I thought there was time."

In September of this year Mrs. Linton contributed an article to the *Fortnightly Review*, entitled "Professsor Henry Drummond's Discovery." It was a scathing indictment of that modern order of writers which takes its science at second-hand, adulterates it with any quantity of sentimentality, and serves it up as a toothsome dish of newly discovered ingredients.

By the kindness of Mr. Herbert Spencer, I am enabled to publish the letter which instigated what was to her a new departure in polemics:—

MR. HERBERT SPENCER TO E. L. L.

"FAIRFIELD, PEWSEY, WILTS,
6th June 1894.

"DEAR MRS. LYNN LINTON,—I am in the mood of mind of the weather-beaten old tar whose nephew proposes to teach him how to box the compass, and who is prompted to tweak his nose.

"The nephew is in this case Professor Drummond, who, in his recently published work, *The Ascent of Man*, with the airs of a discoverer and with a tone of supreme authority, sets out to instruct me and other evolutionists respecting the factor of social evolution which we have ignored—altruism. First raising great expectations as to what he is going to tell us, he announces altruistic action as first displaying itself in maternal sacrifices, primarily bodily, and secondarily mental, as being the factor which has been overlooked and which is the essential factor in social evolution. All this he sets forth with a flourish of trumpets as though it

were new, although in *The Data of Ethics*, published fifteen years ago, in the chapter on 'Altruism *versus* Egoism,' this same root of altruism was duly set forth, and its importance as a social factor emphasised, and in subsequent chapters enlarged upon. As you possibly—perhaps I may say probably—know, I have in various places dwelt upon the necessary genesis of sympathy by social life and the effect of sympathy in qualifying the social struggle for existence and producing a higher type of man and society. The curious thing is, that while Mr. Drummond supposes this factor in social evolution to have been ignored, it is the factor which was first enunciated. For, in my first book, *Social Statics*, published in 1850, increase of sympathy is set forth as the cause of a higher form of man and a higher form of society. Long before the setting forth of the egoistic factor, which he thinks is alone recognised, this altruistic factor had been recognised and its effects described.

"To return to the tweaking of the nose above indicated. I do not, of course, like to undertake it myself, but I should be very glad if somebody would undertake it for me, and, on looking round for a proxy, I thought of you. With your vigorous style and picturesque way of presenting things, you would do it in an interesting and effective way, at the same time that you would be able to illustrate and enforce the doctrine yourself. Doubtless in an article entitled, say, 'Altruism,' you would have many ideas of your own to enunciate, at the same time that you took occasion to rectify this misrepresentation. An interesting essay in the *Nineteenth Century* might be the result, and, not improbably, you might find occasion for dealing from the same point of view with Mr. Kidd's book on *Social Evolution*, now very much talked about.

"If this project should meet with your sympathy, I will send you a copy of the volume, and will also give you references to the relevant passages in my books, sending you those of them which are to be quoted from.—Very truly yours, HERBERT SPENCER.

"*P.S.*—There is a further large subject-matter for criticism in the assumption made by Mr. Drummond, that the recognition of this so-called missing factor would greatly advance the process of social evolution: the truth being that no intel-

lectual change can in any appreciable degree effect a moral change, which is the essential thing. All which a true theory can do is to prevent the mistaken courses of conduct which wrong theories prompt."

On the publication of the article, Mr. Spencer congratulated her in the following generous terms:—

MR. HERBERT SPENCER TO E. L. L.

"QUEEN'S HOTEL, CLIFTONVILLE, MARGATE,
3rd September 1894.

"MY DEAR MRS. LYNN LINTON,—'*Habet!*' I exclaim, in the language of the arena. When I returned you the MS. I thought your article vigorous and effective, and, now that I have read it in print, I see that it is still more vigorous and effective. The thanks I offered you before I must now offer you in double measure.

"I knew that, with your trenchant style, you would do it well, though you modestly thought otherwise; and my expectation is quite verified by the result—the verification of my judgment being amply endorsed. I have seen only two newspapers, and they both recognise the power of your exposure. You may possibly have seen both the *Standard* and the *Chronicle*, but lest you should not have done so, I send the article from the one and the notice from the other.

"The fact that the *Standard* devotes an article to you is sufficiently significant, and I join in the applause given by the writer to your denunciation, not of Professor Drummond only, but of the public taste which swallows with greediness these semi-scientific sentimentalities.

"That topic is a good one to enlarge upon, and you might reserve it for future expansion.

"I address this to Queen Anne's Mansions, presuming that you have by this time returned to town after your long wanderings.—Very sincerely yours,

"HERBERT SPENCER.

"*P.S.*— But for your exposure the thing would have passed without notice, for the critics, when not ignorant, are wanting in all sense of justice and public duty."

For other letters of this year I am indebted to Lady Wardle. Mrs. Linton had made the acquaintance of Mr. (now Sir Thomas) Wardle some years before, and was doing what she could to supplement his efforts, as President of the Silk Association of Great Britain and Ireland, to popularise a national industry. It was in connection with this movement that a witty but cynical friend expressed the hope that *silk*-worms, and not the baser sort, would be eventually employed to destroy Sir Thomas's body.

E. L. L. TO MRS. (NOW LADY) WARDLE.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS, 1894.

"MY DEAR GENIUS OF ORDER,—I have been at home since three o'clock on Thursday last, and have come into such a scene of mistakes, confusion, breakages, mislayings, and *dis*order generally that I have not had time to write to you or any one else. Whether I am ill or well I cannot say. I believe I am alive, but I may be a galvanised corpse, I don't know. I know nothing but that some of my most cherished ornaments have been broken; that every curtain is defectively hung; that more than half the pictures were wrongly placed —meandering in all manner of *un*related places on the walls, where they had never been before; that the electric light put in in my absence is unusable in the drawing-room, because placed so low that the light is on a level with our eyes; that the servant assigned to me is good and willing, but utterly stupid and unpractised, and as deaf as one of your carved bed-posts; and that I am altogether in a state of discomfort, than which I could wish my worst enemy nothing more painful. To-day is really the Sabbath, and I am writing letters that have accumulated. To-morrow I shall have to attack the books. Not one is where I left it, and the *whole* thing was in such confusion—for I have reduced the drawing-room and my bedroom partly into order—that I really felt, and still feel, what can I do first? It seemed and seems hopeless! I have had many a 'hard row to hoe' before now, but never one so hard physically, and with regard to one's patience and courage, as now. I had two things I much prized. One was a very pretty bit of Venetian glass—

broken; the other an *old* black Wedgwood vase, a wedding present in '58, and until now without chip or scratch—cracked and useless. If you were to be behind all the *tracasseries* and worries of this present moment you would pity me.

"It is a most unpleasant little time, and I have need of all my patience and resolution not to be conquered by circumstances. I have always had that feeling that I will never be conquered by any fact of life save the unconquerable two—Old Age and Sickness. These I acknowledge my masters. Outside these *I* am my own possessor. I am going to write a *St. James's* article on that phrase, 'Our hard rows to hoe,' in this sense, how we ought all to feel that Circumstance, when unfriendly, is as an enemy we have to subdue, a wild beast, an armed man who will kill us if we do not kill it. So good-bye, dear, good, kind and orderly woman. Your heart would ache if you were in such a scene of chaos and confusion as I am in now, and if you had a weak back and could not stoop nor stand without pain!!!—Ever your grateful and affectionate friend and guest,

"E. LYNN LINTON."

E. L. L. TO THE SAME.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS, 1894.

"I have been in a state of the most distressing trouble about your son's book. It got damaged, scarcely by my fault. I left it open on my desk while I went for a book from the table—not two steps off. It was the day of the storm, this day week. Some one must have opened a window, or done something of the kind, for suddenly came a gust that blew my door open, and shook the room or table or something, so that the book fell face undermost and cracked the page on which you had written the name. I took it to Webster, one of the best men in London, and only just now got it home. I have fretted and worried about it more than I can express. It has planted *acres* of grey hairs on my head, but I hope the reparation is satisfactory, and that you will write your name and his in the new leaf all the same as the old. The 'water' is not quite the same, I see, but with the writing it will not show. At all events, I have suffered for my involuntary crime—

suffered real tortures. If that will plead for pardon, do pardon me, for indeed it was not carelessness, nor any fault of mine, but a pure accident.

"I am glad the scare about the 'New Boss'[1] has passed over quickly. I really never thought of Mr. ——. The cap was made for heads in the air which it would fit. I never write from direct photographs, but rely on those *composite* 'fellows' which represent the type."

E. L. L. TO THE SAME.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
5th November 1894.

". . . The girls are wrong to take to themselves what is simply a picture in the air. If one never wrote anything that could touch any one, the world of literature would be rather inane! It is my misfortune to make caps that fit. I see a good deal of life, and I write as I see in the abstract, but not meant for special persons. All that I do are generalised studies, and when they touch, they do so because of their truth, not their intentional direction."

E. L. L. TO THE SAME.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
8th December 1894.

". . . I plunged into another cauldron of boiling water over another *St. James's Budget* article, 'Young Dogs.' That *was* meant, confessedly and unmistakably, as a whip across the shoulders of the young author of *The Green Carnation*. He accepted his castigation in the 'handsomest' manner, and wrote me a lovely letter, the letter of a frank-hearted, high-minded young fellow, who had made more effect with his work than he had intended. So we shook hands on paper—he had attacked my friends and those I hold dear, and revere, and he had flung a side sneer at myself, and I paid him back in a paper that seems to have made him a little ashamed of his petulant 'cleverness,' and sorry that he had attacked people so much older and so much more experienced than himself. So *that* hatchet is

[1] An article of hers in the *St. James's Budget*.

buried, and we are good friends. He will probably call here to-day, when I will not fly at his throat, nor will I speak of the matter at all."

A severe and almost fatal attack of bronchitis, in the winter of 1894–95, decided Mrs. Linton to leave Queen Anne's Mansions and set up house for herself in the country. Much to our delight, she settled upon Malvern, which we had lately made our home, and, in the course of the autumn, moved into Brougham House, which she was destined to occupy until her death in 1898.

In addition to her weekly articles in the *Queen* and the *St. James's Budget*, she this year, at the request of Dr. Robertson Nicoll, began a notable series of articles on her literary friendships in the *Woman at Home*. These were republished after her death by Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton, in a volume entitled *My Literary Life*, with an introduction by Miss Beatrice Harraden.

But this was not enough for her industry. In addition to a tale of one hundred and eleven articles for the weeklies and monthlies of this year, she must needs produce a three-volumed novel, written with all the old vigour. It is the old enemy, in her newest habit, at whom she is tilting. Once it was the Girl of the Period, then it was the Shrieking Sisterhood, then the Girton Girl; now it is the turn of the Wild Women—those "initiates for whom life has no sacredness, nature no mystery, morality no holiness." *In Haste and at Leisure* is indeed a scathing criticism of the Emancipated Woman, as Mrs. Linton, no doubt in somewhat exaggerated perspective, saw her. Certainly she makes her revolting in more senses than one. There is much in the book that is unpleasant and that jars like grit between the teeth, but it is a book which no advanced woman could read without being the better for the reading. She slashes away as if endowed with eternal youth. Her fierce indignation is unabated, and pitilessly she bears down upon those "who bustle and buzz through time and space like huge bluebottle flies." Her righteous anger is really magnificent, and yet there are tears in her voice as she pronounces the doom of the insufferable

and wretched Phœbe, and the noble and, but for his nobility, equally wretched Sherard.

Perhaps the most notable thing about this novel is the fact that in it we find this veteran, who had now been writing continuously for half a century, deliberately changing her methods, and adapting herself to modern breathless requirements. She lets her reader have no pause. Sensation trips up the heels of sensation. The steady-going manner of fifty years has given way to a youthlike impetuosity. The younger generation has been met on its own ground and challenged with its own weapons.

CHAPTER XXII

1896–1897

MRS. LINTON was now settled in her Malvern home, and working with unabated vigour. On 1st January she writes to the Hon. Mrs. Nash—

"I have taken a pretty little house, which I have furnished and made home, and here I am with my books, two servants, a garden, a greenhouse, a vine, a table for the birds, domestic worries of coals and oil that go as if they were snow that melts or water that runs away, and good health in this lovely air and perfect quiet. . . . I can speak of Malvern air as of a tonic that works wonders for the debilitated. . . . I am as well as I ever was in my life, and have not had one single *gliff* of cold, and I do not always wear a respirator. 'Senile cough' and 'chronic bronchitis' are unknown here. . . ."

That there was no falling off in the crop of articles for the weeklies and monthlies, is shown by the grand total of 112 for the year 1896. In addition to this, she found time to write a novel in two volumes for Messrs. Chatto & Windus, entitled *Dulcie Everton*, not, however, one of her happiest efforts.

Early this year she was much gratified by an honour done to her by the Society of Authors, of which she had been a member from the beginning. At the annual meeting it was decided "that ladies be declared eligible for election to the Council of the Society." Mrs. Linton was at once unanimously elected by the committee, thus gaining the distinction of being the first authoress to take her seat at the Board of the Literary Federation in Portugal Street.

For further record of this year I shall practically confine

myself to extracts from her letters, merely prefacing them with such notes as may appear necessary for their elucidation.

The first, written to the editor of the *St. James's Gazette*, is a good example of her self-imposed mission in life to hearten up and encourage people in the performance of thankless or depressing duties. She had been an anonymous leader-writer herself, and deeply sympathised with the man who often writes his heart out, knowing well that no more recognition will come to him personally than to the writer of the sporting intelligence or tape prices.

E. L. L. TO MR. SIDNEY LOW.

"BROUGHAM HOUSE, MALVERN,
11th January '96.

"Mrs. Lynn Linton sends her love, respect, and admiration to the writer of the leaders in the *St. James's Gazette*, who is, she imagines, a certain person called Sidney Low. She does not want that writer to feel she is patting him on the back, so that he should say, 'Mrs. L. L. approves. They must be supreme, and I am taller by so many inches!' with the same curl of the lip as the Bond Street fishmonger had, when he turned to his man and said, 'John, put up the shutters! Lord Z—— is taking his custom from us!' Mrs. L. L. is a fool, she knows, but she is an honest, enthusiastic old fool, and if she were not, she would not bother her friend the leader-writer with her senile admiration. She just wants to clasp his hand across space for his manly, wise, and far-seeing articles, which express all the very best traditions and sentiments of Englishmen. If she were within kissing distance, she would probably kiss the hand she clasped, for the old heart beats a little faster, when she reads one of those leaders, and tears come into the old eyes for gratitude and joy at the brave, wise words.

"So, dear friend and editor, do not scorn nor laugh at me. Living here alone, and in such almost unbroken social silence, I get to think and *feel* even more and more and more individually, and undisturbed by others' views.

"My dear love to you both, and thank you for the sweet offer of bed and board when I go to London. I shall probably have to go to an hotel and not fasten myself on any

one. I hope you are well. I am, splendidly!—Affectionately yours, my dear Mr. Low and good patriot,

"E. LYNN LINTON."

The first words of the following extract allude to the fact that Mrs. Linton often wrote what were now her daily letters to Mrs. Gedge on the backs of invitations, begging letters, notices, advertisements, editors' letters, or any other scrap which might prove of interest to her sister. Mrs. Gedge had been seriously ill, but had sufficiently recovered to write the first letter of her convalescence.

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"BROUGHAM HOUSE, MALVERN,
17th January 1896.

"You deserve a bit of decent paper as my first answer to your first letter. Well, Lucy, I was rather glad to see it! very truly so. It gave me a sudden cold, Lucy, so that I had to blowsy my nose and wipe my eyes, and then I could read it after I had done that. But those sudden colds, Lucy, are queer, queer when one is very glad of nothing! I am indeed glad, Loo beloved, that you feel out of the wood. You have come out by obedience to your doctor's orders, and you'll stay out in the free, fresh air of security so long as you obey and attend to him. . . . When you take the bit into your own teeth, Lucy, I shall be miserably anxious again. . . . Work lies ready for me to do, and the cries of the press are many and loud."

E. L. L. TO MRS. (NOW LADY) WARDLE.

"BROUGHAM HOUSE, MALVERN,
9th February '96.

". . . Time passes with me like a silent, swiftly running stream—not sluggish and not stagnant, but making no great stir. Each day full of something, but each day the very twin of its brother, so that, when Sunday comes round, I feel as if it was only the day before yesterday that we had the Sunday dinner, and the clean tablecloth, and all the little

MRS. LYNN LINTON

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domestic observances that mark the first day in the week from the last. I live here the quietest life you can imagine. On the fine days I go out for a walk, and if I have calls to make, I make them and find the ladies out too. A great many people have called on me, and I see them; but it is a case of Taffy went to my house, and I went to Taffy's, and neither was at home. There are several whom I have not seen, and I do not know when I shall. The society here seems mainly given up to afternoonities. There are very few dinners and no luncheons, but afternoon teas answer all the purposes of hospitality, and make a meeting-place for friends. I like my life here very much. It is not exactly an indolent one, yet I shrink from disturbing its smooth and even tenor."

Mrs. Linton had asked my small daughter to write out for her a nursery rhyme which she had forgotten.

E. L. L. TO NANCY LAYARD (AGED 9).

"BROUGHAM HOUSE, MALVERN,
26th April 1896.

"DEAREST LITTLE NANCY,—Thank you for your kind and beautifully written 'Cock Robin and Jenny Wren.' I shall always keep it as a sweet reminder of my dear little friend, as a proof of her willingness to oblige and her willingness to take trouble. For it is a long piece to copy, and copying correctly is always a little difficult, demanding a great deal of care and exactness. Indeed, nothing good can be done without care and exactness. Some one once said that genius—that is the greatest power of the mind—is the faculty for taking infinite pains. I do not think this is *quite* true, but it shows the high opinion held of that 'faculty for taking infinite pains.' You know that when you learn a lesson only half, just to be able to say it off and not to be turned back, you do not know it thoroughly, and soon forget it. When you learn it well, so that you seem to understand it from the beginning to the end, you do not forget it. You have taken pains, and have been careful and exact, and you have made one step more towards being a sweet and clever and darling girl—mother's dear help and companion, and father's dear help and companion too; and that is such

delightful happiness!—to know that they trust you, and may trust you, and that you are really a help to them and can save them trouble, because you attend to what you are doing, and so do it well.

"All this has come about because you copied 'Cock Robin's Wedding' exactly, well, and kindly!

"I am going to London to-morrow for a few days, so shall not see you; but I hope when I come back that you will often come and bring me messages from mother.

"Give my best love to John, and be kind to him and to the dollies too! and give my best love to dearest father and mother, whom I love with all my heart.—My little Nancy's affectionate old friend, E. LYNN LINTON."

In August, whilst on a visit to Keswick with her dear friend Mrs. Dobie, she wrote to her niece—

E. L. L. TO MISS ADA GEDGE.

"Thank you for your dear, kind, and interesting letter.

"Among the unfathomed mysteries of this mysterious life of ours is the joy we have in *creation*. We call it art or we call it invention, but the motive force is the same—this wonderful fascination to the mind of the power of making. The artist has sensations which are too vague for formalised thoughts. They cannot be put into words—but there is a kind of super-sensual sense divine reaching out into far-distant brilliant heights where the mind is too dumb—dazzled to understand clearly what it feels, but which fills the whole being with a kind of silent ecstasy of enjoyment. That is true *art* so far as the temperament goes. The mechanical skill of manipulation, the aptitude for technique, comes into another category."

By October she was back in Malvern and in love with her "quiet and active life, early hours, incessant industry."

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"How the force of what Mr. Ransford said comes home to me, 'the slowness of all agriculturists and of all who have

to do with nature—brought about by the long, long months of waiting in the operations of nature.'

"My lilies that I want to see in bloom and that will not appear for months yet—the seedlings, forget-me-nots, etc. etc. —the hollyhocks all to be waited for in patience till their time comes.

"All people who have to do with nature must learn *patience*."

E. L. L. TO THE SAME.

"BROUGHAM HOUSE,
8th December 1896.

"Yesterday Mr. Layard brought me the first volume of *Manning's Life*. It is a curious revelation of very earnest piety and want of that kind of sturdy fidelity which makes good men martyrs. He trimmed very much between Tractarianism and *Anglicanism* before he went over to Rome and was one of the most uncompromising *delators* of Rome. The first volume deals with him only as an English clergyman. In the second, which I have not got yet, he is the Roman. Newman was a much more thorough man than he, and was as unworldly as Manning was worldly and ambitious. But Newman never *got on* as Manning did, and never wished. We shall never know the secrets of the Vatican, nor *why* Newman, who was such a valuable convert to the papacy, was so neglected by the Church. There was something we do not know, and probably never shall—some part of his mind had refused absolute obedience. I have just been reading another book that would horrify you—an account of three actual living *churches* in Paris dedicated to SATAN. There are three separate congregations, and the account of their doings is awful even in the little I read. Your hair would stand on end. It seems incredible, but there are names and chapters and verses and even a *literature* of the whole thing. There are two sects, the Satanists and Luciferists—and they pray to these names as Gods. . . . I send you this letter, written to the editor of the *Queen*, and forwarded to me about my Christmas story. It gives a little indication of what *we*, the poor unhappy purveyors of amusement for the public, have to put up with from our masters.

"The wonderfullest thing, Lucy, in all human life to me,

is the small amount of sense needed for even honest and respectable men and women! We are very stupid, Lucy! very amœba-ish in our minds! Well, dear, that's that."

E. L. L. TO THE SAME.

"BROUGHAM HOUSE,
20th December 1896.

"I have had the feeling you speak of, Loo, with Ernest, as if the beloved was there in the room. The mind creates its own world, and imagination is as powerful a fact as reality of sense. We see and know and feel and are, by the brain alone, acted on by the sense organs through the nerves. If you act on the brain independently of the sense organs, you bring about the same result, but weaker, as dreams are not so vivid as realities, and waking dreams do not satisfy like the touch and sight and moving—still the brain works and this (weaker) result is produced, and you felt the presence of the son you love so fondly though you could not see him. 'This earth is full of messages that Love sends to and fro,' and we know very little yet of the possibilities of spiritual communication.

"Who knows? He might have been thinking of you very intently then, for he loves you *dearly*, and you might have met in the spirit if not in the body. No one knows, Loo, what life really is—what are its possibilities. We know a little but not all! . . . One must have one of two things to get on in this life—buoyant cheerfulness that cannot be 'submerged,' and that always rises to the surface like a cork, or grim and dogged determination *not* to be conquered."

In the currentless backwater of her life at Malvern, Mrs. Linton still continued her literary activities. No doubt at times she felt like the miller who had been a sailor, and fretted because the sails with which he had sailed about the world were now harnessed to the comparatively stationary service of working his windmill, but on the whole she was in love with the quiet life.

Writing to Lady Paget this year (1897), after referring to the old days in Italy, she exclaims: "The contrast with my quiet life in this quiet little cottage, growing old in peace

and silence, and with some, not *too*, poignant regret for all the vigour and vitality of the dead past! . . . In all probability I shall never cross the silver strip again, for I have lost my strength and health, and have to fight off Death in the shape of 'lung-trouble,' as the Americans say, having had two hand-to-hand struggles with the, in the end, Inevitable Conqueror."

But she was essentially of those who realise that

> The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven,

and it would have taken something far less tolerable than Malvern, which she dearly loved, and where she had regained much of her lost vigour of body, to damp her ardent love of life.

The early part of the year 1897 brought with it a disappointment in connection with her work. For reasons which it is unnecessary to state, the editor of the *St. James's Budget*, Mr. Penderel-Brodhurst, felt it incumbent upon him to reduce the number of her articles by one half, with the result that they would appear fortnightly instead of weekly. The old pay was to continue, but the work was to be less. This arrangement, however, she refused to fall in with, generous though undoubtedly it was, feeling that she would be sacrificing her independence in accepting pay which seemed to her a species of dole. Fortnightly articles she would write, but the old remuneration must be halved. Soon, however, she decided to discontinue them, preferring to forego this source of income altogether, rather than continue to write on what she felt was suspiciously like sufferance. I should add that for Mr. Penderel-Brodhurst she always retained the highest opinion, often enlarging upon his great courtesy and consideration, and fully recognising that his first duty was to his paper and to his public.

On another occasion she showed the same independent spirit when offered payment by Mr. Chambers for prospective work on his journal: "Thank you a thousand times; but no! no money until it is fairly earned! I might die one day in your debt, and then my poor ghost would have to take to

wandering and gibbering, perhaps to knocking its empty head against tables, and beseeching incredulous executors to pay you back!"

The loss of employment on the *Budget* caused a serious gap in her regular income, but, nothing daunted, she at once set to work to repair the deficiency. She was chiefly concerned lest her private charities, which were out of all proportion to her income, but of which I am debarred by circumstances from giving particulars, should suffer.

The outcome of this necessity was her last and posthumously published novel, *The Second Youth of Theodora Desanges*.

This year she also wrote for *The Women Novelists of the Reign of Queen Victoria* a long and vigorous appreciation and criticism of George Eliot, for which, I believe, she re-read every one of the novels from beginning to end. "I am going to put some honey and butter on the point of my knife," she wrote to me, "but knife it will be, stuck into the writer of *Felix Holt*."

From the following letter, it would appear that it was only after she found that Mrs. Gaskell had already been appropriated, that she, somewhat against her will, undertook Marian Evans.

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"BROUGHAM HOUSE, MALVERN,
17th January 1897.

"I have had a letter from Hurst & Blackett asking me to contribute to a Queen's Jubilee kind of volume they are going to bring out, of reviews of dead authoresses by the living. They have given me my choice, of all the chief; but I have set aside George Eliot and Charlotte Brontë, Mrs. Craik (Diana Mulock) and Harriet Martineau, and if I do any at all, have chosen Mrs. Gaskell. Not that I *know* anything of her, and I have not read her books since I was a young woman, but my impression of her is sweet. She was such an unaffected woman—to my memory, at least. I saw her once, and she seemed to me such a dear, and not as affected as either George Eliot or Mrs. Craik. I should have to read all her books again if I did her. . . . I

always feel I owe a debt of gratitude to Mrs. Gaskell, for, when I was quite young and was being acrimoniously discussed at Harriet Martineau's, she upped and defended me, though she knew nothing of me. So, if I *do* her, she cast her bread upon the waters then, and will find it to her memory after long years. I never forget a kindness—nor an injury—Lucy, and if I am tenaciously grateful, I am also tenaciously resentful."

It must not be supposed, however, that her *Queen* articles and other publications made up anything approaching the actual sum of her pen's activity—either for this or indeed for any other year of her life. I have lying before me her letter-book, in which she made a memorandum of every letter written during the year 1897. The grand total is 2124, a very large number of them being replies to persons asking for literary advice, or discussing further with her the subjects of which she had treated in her books and articles. No small proportion consisted, of course, of requests from autograph hunters, whose cupidity I believe she always satisfied. Indeed, she was almost excessively scrupulous as a correspondent, and fiercely repudiated, on the score of good manners, Lord Palmerston's dictum that all letters answered themselves, if left unanswered long enough.

I shall conclude this chapter with some of the more interesting letters of the year.

In April she was the specially invited guest of the Authors' Society at the annual dinner, and was given the place of honour on the chairman's right hand, as *doyenne* of the profession.

The following letter is in answer to an invitation from her friend Mrs. Kelly, to stay with her for that function, Nansen's lecture, and the private view of the Royal Academy:—

E. L. L. to Mrs. Kelly.

"Brougham House, Malvern,
7th January '97.

"Dearest Ella Kelly,—Your sweet letter and the formal invitation from the Authors' Society have thrown

me into a sea of perplexity. I should like to go immensely, I should like to go to the Nansen lecture immensely, and I should love to go and stay with you. The spirit is willing all through—but the poor old flesh? Am I fit to go and stay with any one in the winter? I want so much warmth! —a fire to go to bed by, and a fire to get up by, and a hot bath in the morning—not a decent, cool, tepid fellow, but water as hot as can be borne without inconvenience—and is not this all a nuisance beyond words to any mistress?—not to speak of the servants! In the summer I am not such a bother, but February has still the chill of winter hanging upon its shoulders, and if I get cold—well! I am even *more* unpleasant as a companion and housemate than when I have only to take care not to be chilled.

"I scarcely know what to say. I shall have to write to the Society to-day, yes or no, and of course to you I must say yes or no before I finish the letter. I wish it had been later! What a worry indecision is, darling! That shuttlecock of the mind, 'back and forth,' is far worse than doing the most painful thing possible. To hesitate over a pleasure —shall I? shall I not?—is in itself a pain. Well! I must say one thing or another. *I want to go*, and I am afraid of giving so much trouble, and also I am afraid of taking cold—my grand enemy!

"For the Nansen lecture, if I felt *seedy* after the journey, we could let it slip, so far as I am concerned. Shall I say yes? I should like it so much—but I am a nuisance in a house, with one thing and another—and the morning's work that *must* be done, wherever I may be! I know you will not mind all this, but *I* do for you. Still—still—the temptation is too great! Selfish or not, 'here goes!'—Yes, darling, on the 8th I will go up, and I will go up by a train that will get me into London by daylight.

"Most selfish of women as I am, I am your loving friend all the same!—and your dear husband's too.—Ever your gratefullest nuisance, E. LYNN LINTON."

Unfortunately her worst fears were realised, and she promptly went down with a severe attack of bronchitis, to which she was now terribly susceptible. "I get it," she said, "if the wind looks at me through the window."

Many of her longest letters of this period consist of the

minutest particulars of her garden and its feathered visitors, which would have delighted Miss Jekyll and the authoress of *A Solitary Summer*. I must not allow myself more than a specimen quotation—

"The vine is pruned now close to the stem, a mere skeleton of a vine, not a single extraneous branchlet left. He looks a poor polled shorn sheep, but it is necessary for the future good of the grapes. . . . My greedy tits have eaten almost all the other half of the cocoa-nut put up on Tuesday. They eat it all day long. I am going to expend 2½d. for a pound of hemp-seed for the wretches. I wish I had more than sparrows and starlings. These come in their thousands (not quite, perhaps eight or ten or a dozen), but no others that I can see but the tits, two of these, the ox-eyed and the smaller (*not* the long-tailed)."

The following letter from Mr. Herbert Spencer, with its interesting suggestion for the "crowning work" of her life, presupposes a quality of mind in Mrs. Linton, with which, I venture to think, she was not endowed. I find no evidence in her writings, and I never discovered in private intercourse, any outstanding quality of constructiveness. True, she touched bottom and arrived at what might do as a foundation, but she offered no systems in place of those which she set herself to destroy and overthrow. Her function was to raise the battle-cry, not to marshal the troops in the field. And no one was more keenly alive to her lack of executive ability, the result of her want of systematic education, than she was herself. Her answer to Mr. Spencer's letter is not forthcoming, but I am inclined to think that she must have disclaimed any capacity for "the collection of evidence and balancing of results." At any rate, there are no signs that she contemplated undertaking the task.

MR. HERBERT SPENCER TO E. L. L.

"MOLYNEUX PARK HOTEL, TUNBRIDGE WELLS,
15th June 1897.

"DEAR MRS. LYNN LINTON,—Let me suggest to you a work which might fitly be the crowning work of your life—a work on *Good and Bad Women*.

"You have rather obtained for yourself the reputation of holding a brief for Men *versus* Women, whereas I rather think the fact is that you simply aim to check that over-exaltation of women which has long been dominant, and which is receiving an *éclatante* illustration in a recent essay by Mrs. J. R. Green, which is commented upon in this week's *Spectator*. The flattering of women has been, one might almost say, a chief business of poets, and women have most of them very readily accepted the incense with little qualification; and this has been so perpetual and has been so habitually accepted by men, as to have caused a perverted opinion.

"I think you might, at the same time that you duly dealt with that side of the question, which you have done frequently, deal with the other side by emphasising the goodness of women in many illustrations and in many cases, and you would thus re-habilitate yourself in the matter at the same time that you would be doing an extremely serviceable thing.

"The natures of men and women are topics of continual discussion, but entirely of random discussion, with no analysis and no collection of evidence and balancing of results.

"If you entertain my proposal, I should like very well by and by to make some suggestions as to modes of inquiry and modes of comparison.—Truly yours,

"HERBERT SPENCER."

E. L. L. TO MRS. HARTLEY.

"c/o MRS. MILLS, NEWBIE, BOWDON,
CHESHIRE, *9th July* '97.

"MY VANISHING LADY,—How are you? where are you? In heaven or in the earth? Married or single? With three children or none? What has happened to you? swallowed up in an earthquake? Have the grace and kindness, Beatrice Hartley, to put pen to paper and make some of your extraordinary t's and send me a line to tell me how things are with you, as I feel a little cold and unclothed and not sufficiently wrapped up in heart or mind when I miss that recalcitrant daughter's scrambly epistles for *very* long together!

"I came here on Tuesday, and was really glad to travel alone to prove that I was not the imbecile *you all* try to make me out, and not such a fool as to need a mistress—

no matter who—but any one's judgment as superior to my own.

"It is very cold here, quite winter again, and I have a fire in my bedroom. I have taken a little cold, but not much, only the old throat feeling of paved bricks or concrete instead of pliable cords and muscles!

". . . Good-bye, my lost star. Love to the dear demons.—Bee's mother and friend, POOR BONES."

Mrs. Linton had boiled over with indignation at Lady Burton's egregious "Life" of her husband, and welcomed the prospect of *The True Life of Captain Sir R. F. Burton*, upon which Miss Stisted was now engaged.

E. L. L. TO MISS STISTED.

". . . I am very glad indeed to hear that there is to be a truthful and rational life of dear Sir Richard Burton. I have always resented Lady Burton's false and affected endeavour to claim for her husband the profession of a faith which, if he did hold, proved him the falsest and most cowardly of men. She and I crossed swords on that point, and I said to her roundly that Sir Richard belonged to the world, not only to her, and that she had degraded his memory by her assumptions of this and that principle we all know he did not hold. I said, and have ever said, a man must stand or fall by his own life, and that the greatest indignity that can be done to his memory is to interfere with the integrity of his principles expressed and acknowledged during his lifetime. It was only her intense vanity that made Lady Burton take the attitude she did. Had she really loved and respected her husband as she professed, she would have been content to *leave him to himself*, and not have placed herself on the throne of the superior and on the seat of the judge. She would have somehow reconciled it to herself that he was an 'infidel' yet 'saved.' Love has no better toga than this of divine partiality. 'God will save him (or her) for his goodness, for all his want of faith.' So Lady Burton would have said, and would have carried out to the letter every wish of her dead husband, and would have respected his integrity."

That Mrs. Linton was a past-master in the "art of growing old" was an axiom with her friends. The spirit in which she accepted old age is shown by three letters of this period.

E. L. L. TO LADY PAGET.

"BROUGHAM HOUSE,
5th September '97.

" . . . Do you remember that expressive old myth of Thor, when he was set to try his strength against the Old Woman and could not throw her, struggle as he might? He made a good fight of it, but, grand wrestler as he was, the Old Woman threw him—and then the gods laughed and said, 'Small blame to him.' The Old Woman was Old Age, and she must conquer in the end! I do my bit of Thor work faithfully and fight off all I can—but—but—those feet shod with wool creep up and up and nearer and nearer, and a brave—not craven—acceptance is the wisest way!"

E. L. L. TO MISS JEAN MIDDLEMASS.

"*27th December* '97.

" I do not think any one realises more vividly than I the contraction of time—the gradual lessening to nothingness of that *peau de chagrin* in which is inscribed our term of life—but without dread, without repining—with a *little* regret that the day has to come when I shall not see the sky and the clouds and the fields and the flowers, and shall not hear the song of birds or the voice of friends. Still it is the charter on which we have held our life and enjoyed our days! I find old age has infinite compensations. If we have lost the grand activities and glorious personal possessions of youth, we have lost its disturbing passions and turbulent unrest. We have peace, and we can give so much happiness to others! I feel like a cornucopia, whence I can pour out small good gifts to the poor, and the greater gifts of sympathy, wise advice, and affection for my friends. I feel a kind of pride in saying to myself, 'No one shall be made unhappy by me. All shall be made happier for the brief moment of contact. All shall feel the warmth of human

love and sympathy, and the ice of selfishness shall never form round my heart.

"Yes, old age is lovely too, love*lier* than youth was in its very majesty of daring—its insurgency, its enthusiasms, its sublime beliefs and its radiant ignorance!

"So there you have a close-of-the-year page of reflections! I wonder why I scrawled all that down to vex your eyesight! All good be yours in '98 and onward.—Affectionately yours,

"E. LYNN LINTON."

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"BROUGHAM HOUSE, MALVERN,
27th December 1897.

"I was thinking last night when I went to bed what a lot of pleasure is still left to us old people! When we are tired and sleepy to go up to that warm, comfortable bedroom and warm, comfortable bed and sleep—what a pleasure it is! and then to wake up in the morning and be ALIVE—to see the sky and the hill and the laurels and the road and the trees, and to be still ONE with this divine nature, and to have yet on one's plate some of the *banquet de la vie* we have enjoyed so long—what a joy that is—and then to do good and kindly to one's fellows—to make one's servants and surroundings happy by one's geniality and consideration, to help the cheerfulness of one's companions by one's own, mellowed as it is by the consciousness of the smallness of little worries and the nearness of the great things—all this is the joy of old age, Lucy—to taste with lingering love the few drops left us, and to do good and kindly by our fellows, and to be sweet-tempered and genial and cheerful for their sakes. *I* have lost much. In early youth and maturity my great joy was in long walks, in the putting out of my strength, and in seeing new places. Later, when that physical strength left me, I was a social personage. If I went into a public place, I heard people whisper my name and stare; and if I went into private society, I was always the main centre of the company —always—and now I am here quite alone, without being able to go even on the Wyche Road on my feet . . . And I am as happy as possible. I have lost my great home amusement, embroidery, and my eyes are fearfully unserviceable—but that too I face cheerfully. . . . '98 is close on us. We are

getting very old, you and I—but we can still play our part in life well and worthily and give the happiness which, by giving, we receive."

The following remarkable letter, written to one who shall be nameless, is a sufficient answer to those who charged Mrs. Linton with reckless iconoclasm. It is, moreover, a noble admission on her part of the weakness of the agnostic's position, which was hers. Her own case was that of Reason *versus* Experience. The former was with her too strong for the latter. She was unable to recognise in Christianity anything more than a step in the ethical ascent of the race. Yet it was a step of the utmost importance, and the race as a whole was not ripe for its abandonment. She admitted, indeed, that she might be wrong in her conclusions, and that what she regarded as only a stage might be the final platform. And for this reason, although for herself she must abandon it as a resting-place, she dare not take upon herself the responsibility of kicking away its supports. Indeed, she felt it incumbent upon her to strengthen rather than weaken them, as was shown by the family prayers which she made it her duty to read to her household, and by her open support of the Established Church. And, holding the opinions she did, she was no more acting untruly than are we when we modify truth for our children in matters which they are not mentally strong enough to assimilate.

" . . . At the risk of boring, perhaps of vexing you, I must write out my thoughts on this late craze of yours, for it is nothing else, against your children's religious life. You are doing what I should not have moral strength to do—taking on yourself the responsibility of those young souls, and destroying one of the strongest incentives that man has to be virtuous and to abstain from vice. *I* would as soon tell —— the whole mysteries of life and vice and maternity, etc., and fling her into the society of fast women. Also with the boys. Yet I am not a moral coward, as I think my life has proved. But the responsibility one accepts for one's own soul I certainly would not dare to accept for the souls of others—my own children above all. You talk of reason being our guide—reason of what period? of what school?

Have we in the nineteenth century the fee simple of Truth any more than any other age has had? What do we know of the grand mystery of life and death and pain, and the why and wherefore of things — of the whence and the whither? Can reason tell us any more than an (even so-called) revelation? Reason is silent. Reason leads us to absolute agnosticism; but do you want your children to be without a guide to good living? without a God in the world? What reason have they got? When the time of youthful passions comes for your boys, will reason keep them out of the haunts of evil, or may you not hope something from the belief of the purity demanded by God for acceptance, and taught by Christ as the model for humanity? Why throw open the doors to them to every kind of sinful excess by taking from them all the restraints of religion? and why stultify yourself as you will do? You had them baptized—you have had —— confirmed—you take them to church—and now, suddenly, because you have heard a man of whom you know nothing, whose apparent record is *bad*, but of whom you choose to assume all holiness and purity of motive and faithfulness to truth, you are inclined to make your children all 'rationalists'—to destroy the only real authority you have over them, and to open to them the way to corruption of morals and undutifulness of life. You have not thought out the matter. You have neither studied nor been instructed. You have given yourself *tête baissée* to this man, and are now going to inflict the very worst injury you *can* on your children for the craze you have suddenly taken against religion. All this is not the sign of a well-balanced mind, as little as your restlessness about ——, and your fidgeting about her companions, her *pleasure* — and she still under instruction!—and her future. All ——'s bodily restlessness is repeating itself in your mental instability. You can let nothing go on quietly — your house—your children—your life — all must be in a perpetual state of change, and of placid contentment you do not seem to me to have a trace. I don't think I have ever known so restless a mind as yours, one always so seeking for change of condition. But nothing is of the same importance as this new departure of yours—so superficially come at! of desire to destroy your children's faith in Christianity, when you have nothing better to give them. Far rather than that you should do this, cultivate

your vicar, and let *him* talk to the children. If your own sense of truth is so strong that you cannot conceal your denial for the sake of their supreme good, get some one who has no doubts to strengthen that which to young people is their only safeguard. To the young and ignorant some kind of positive faith is an *absolute necessity*, and the best philosophers, who have thought out the matter with long and anxious care, will say the same thing. You call me 'mad' and all sorts of injurious things, because I recognise this and do all that I can to strengthen the faith—and with the faith—the practising my ignorant servants in the Christian religion—concealing from them my own unbelief as a thing with which they have nothing to do—a thing which concerns my own self only. As a member of the community I feel bound to support so far openly the Established Church. All my intelligent friends here know the real truth, and some of them are in exactly the same state as myself—unbelievers in the *mythology*, but conformists outwardly for the sake of the weaker brethren—and those who have children for the sake of the children. I remember hearing ——, brought up an atheist, say it was the most cruel thing that could be done to a child to bring him up without a definite religion. Give him the chance of a choice, and when he is old enough to reason and judge, *then* let him do so."

The last letter of 1897 dwells much on the approach of death. It was about this time that she told me of her doctor's verdict the last time she was in London. She had insisted on his telling her the whole truth, and this was that the chief organs of her body were well-nigh worn out, and that they were in the condition he should expect to find in a woman ten years her senior.

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"BROUGHAM HOUSE, MALVERN,
The last day of '97.

"For the New Year's Day you deserve a decent sheet of paper, to carry you my dear, unchanging love, that has lasted now for, say, seventy years. I was about five years old, perhaps, when I felt that great love for you that went on into

the child's vow to be your best and most devoted, when poor Edmund died and you had lost your then favourite companion. That went on farther into the time when we were both grown girls, and I was the stronger and more robust, and carried you in my arms through the incoming tidal puddles at Allonby, when we both had whooping-cough, and you were delicate. So it has gone on through life, with occasional, very occasional, little whiffs and breaths of slight misunderstanding, when we did *not* agree about our estimate of things, and we did not see 'eye to eye' but a wee bit 'cross-eyed.' And those were chiefly about the children when they were little, and I had the reformer's fever, and wanted to see this and that a little modified. But those were no more than the flimsiest summer clouds in the sky of our enduring *friendship*, and now at the close of our lives it is as warm and strong as ever. . . . It is a comfort that we have held together so strongly and closely, and that we are still of the old family and with the old family memories to look back to in concert. I am glad you like *Julia*. I had read it, for Mr. Stead sent me two copies, one for myself and one to give away. It does not matter what *I* think of it. I knew it would comfort and soothe you. But I do not think it well or wise, sweet Loot, to dwell on that which we can never know till we experience. Nor can we in the present state, with all the limitation of our senses and bodily experience, rightly conceive what the future will be. It is all unprofitable speculation; and the vague undesignated hope and trust that it will be all well—and so leave it—is better. While we live, our duty is plain and clear—to live for others and to be thoughtful of others, considerate to them in all ways, and unselfish in our endeavour to make them happy. No one can realise the nearness of death more vividly than I do—and for that very cause I *live* every hour of the day that I can. I should think a day terribly lost where I had not done something kind, or said or written, or in some way felt, that I had cast a ray of sunshine, however pale and weak, over some one's life. It is a joy to me to see how intensely happy my servants are, and how happy even the kitten is! Now no one who comes in contact with me leaves me without a smile and a glow of pleasure somehow created. This I take as my duty, and I fulfil it, no matter what I am suffering in my own person. For I am never out of pain. I

never know a moment's cessation from pain. . . . I hold to the duty of happiness. 'By reason of the frailty of our flesh' we cannot be happy when under the sharp pang of affliction; but we can and ought to be, when we have nothing but the ordinary little *tracasseries* of life to meet, and nothing worse than the failing power of enjoyment inseparable from old age. . . . Death is nearer to us than it was, but the other life is not one whit more real than before. It was as real when we were young as it is now—only a little farther off. But we have no more right now than we had then to merge the actual living present, and to lose the gain and good of life, for the sake of the future and the state after death. You say you will not be long here; so say I of myself. I have certain symptoms which tell me I may 'drop' at any moment; but I keep all this in the secret recesses of my own heart, and simply DO what I can for others. And I am as cheerful as the sunlight on the field and lawn opposite. Why not? The day is drawing to its night. It must come —and we must all like tired children go to bed at last. But let us be happy unto the end! It is our duty to others. . . . My dear, dear love to you, Lucy, for '98, as for all the years that lie behind us."

CHAPTER XXIII

1898

THE end of 1897 brought the news by telegraph of Mr. Linton's death in America on 29th December. From his later letters Mrs. Linton had learned that life had become a burden to him, and it was rather a relief than otherwise to know that the "weariness worse than pain" was over. There was no poignant sense of personal loss, for she had known over thirty years of practical widowhood; but still old memories were stirred to the depths—memories of past youth, past hopes, past enthusiasms, and, without feigning what she did not feel, the year 1898 opened with sadness in her heart and tears very near the surface.

Writing to Lady Wardle, she says, "I do not know if you have seen in the paper the announcement of poor dear Mr. Linton's death. He was eighty-five, and quite worn out. Life had no more to give him now but pain and sorrow, and existence had become a burden. It is best so. He is at peace and rest, and anyhow he is better off than when he was groaning in that weariness which is *worse* than pain! He either knows no more of suffering or of joy—or he is free from the one and is full in the sunshine of the other!"

In something of the same strain she writes to her friend Mr. Oakley: "All great artists of whatever branch have done well to say farewell while yet they are regretted and desired. I remember Dejazet in her decrepitude playing her famous piece of *Richelieu*. She had to hold her poor dear feet wide apart for a better 'base of support.' She was old, old, old, and she had been such a brilliant star! I thought it a tragedy at the time, and I think the same kind of thing still a tragedy."

To Mr. Mackenzie Bell she writes—"No death can happen in one's—even remote—circle without bringing with it pain and regret and the memory of the past. I had been separated from poor dear Mr. Linton for over thirty years—but I bear his name and he *was* my husband, who once loved me and I him! He was a singularly gifted man, and most charming in conversation. If he had not bitten the Dead Sea apple of impracticable politics he would have risen higher in the world of both art and letters. But he put out his best strength to water the sea sand and to hunt the snark! In any case, he was thoroughly sincere."

And again to a Malvern friend, Mrs. Peacock—"Thank you for your sympathy. I have been in deepish waters on more accounts than one, but things pass, and the bad things pass with the good! I have such a strong feeling as to the claims of the present and the need of living while we are alive, that I fight my way clear—after a time—and I shall now, as often before!"

And to her sister—"I don't pretend for a moment that my life is touched in the very remotest degree, but my *heart* is, and I cannot help thinking of the olden time. Still I have such a strong feeling that life is around and before us, not behind, save as one cherishes old treasures, old rose-leaves, old trinkets, things to keep but not to brood over, not to live for and with, to the exclusion of all the more pressing claims of the present—as I feel this so much, I do not let myself gloom, and I do go on as usual."

The early part of 1898 found her engaged upon the drastic revision of the novel, *The Second Youth of Theodora Desanges*, which she had completed in 1897, but with which she had become dissatisfied. She was now breaking it up, putting back the action some thirty years, and re-writing large portions. At the time of her death it had again been structurally completed, but not finished in detail and finally revised.

The interest of the book lies not so much in the story as in the fact that here we have the final utterances of one whose brain was well-nigh as active, and whose touch was almost as certain, at seventy-five as it had been at forty.

And that I do not overstate the case when I claim for her an extraordinary measure of intellectual keenness, will, I think, be evident from the last batch of letters (the most vital part of biography, according to E. B. Browning) which it is my privilege to lay before the reader.

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"BROUGHAM HOUSE, MALVERN,
3rd January 1898.

"We follow the law of our physical being so closely, and when we are well things all look bright, and when we are not well they look dark. But also we have a *certain* amount of free will and a *certain* amount of power over ourselves, and as we resolutely set ourselves to *be* and to *think* and to live, so we can, up to a certain point. Hopelessness has always been your cross. . . . Only remember, dear, that life is exactly as it was when we were children. It is *we* who have changed, not humanity. That remains constant with a different dress, but the thing underneath is the same. The want of respect and discipline among the children is unpleasant to us who were brought up under a different régime—but it is perhaps better than the deceit and slyness and suppressed lives and crushed individuality of the older, sterner rule.

"All things have *two* sides, and hopeless ruin does not stare us in the face yet. As I told you, sweetheart, I find my happiness in activities of small kindnesses. I cannot do big things for any one, but I do all sorts of little things, and the first thought I have is, what can I do to help so and so? What can I say? What can I give? Life to me is life and has to be lived, and the preparation for the hereafter is the now. When we grow old the *imperiousness* of passion and our own individuality burns low and sinks, and then the others are the first consideration. To live in others and for others—to be eager to utilise the fast-fleeting time for all good that may come in our way—to feel that 'he prayeth best who loveth best'—that to me is the one great law and rule of life. Social and even literary ambitions have fallen from me—but not the love of my kind—not the desire to help, to solace, to brighten the lives of others. In doing so one finds one's own happiness—and all that one *can* have,

with one's weakened energies and absolutely nil future for good fortune. Prince Charming, who used to live round the corner, is dead and buried—there are no fortunes to be made and no legacies to come. The past and present have determined the future for ourselves, save in the possibility of sorrow; but love remains—love of our own—love of one's kind, love of nature and beauty and art and goodness—and *only* when love dies, then does the meaning of life die too!"

Love had come to be with her not "merely a reality, not merely the greatest of realities, but the only reality," as Ruskin said religion was with Holman Hunt.

"Oh, thank God!" she cries, "oh, thank God that we can love, and thank God when we have loved! Let it all go from us, let it be stilled in death, or quenched in tears—the past remains true and our own, and the love that has been neither can be denied nor destroyed."

Like many old people, she was now troubled with early wakefulness. Then, for two or three hours before she could get up, the torment of memory would take hold of her, and the sense of loneliness would become almost unbearable. She has often told me that she could only keep herself from hours of weeping by repeating the poetry with which she never ceased to store her brain. As an example of her extraordinarily accurate memory for such things, I may mention that she gave me a copy of the *Barrack-Room Ballads*, verbally restored throughout from memory to the original form in which she had first seen them, as they appeared from time to time in the *National Observer*, *St. James's Gazette*, and *Athenæum*.

The keenness of her delight in nature appears in the following letter:—

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"BROUGHAM HOUSE, MALVERN,
4th January 1898.

"We are having some Malvern weather, so very damp and misty—and so cold. It is a terribly cold place, but a dear,

sweet, lovely place too! When I get up in the morning the world is all dark grey—a *light* black—and the morning is nothing but as yet a promise, 'Who's der knocking at de door?'—Soon it grows lighter, a light grey, then white, and then light. It is lovely to see the transitions. . . . I am so glad to have the habit of getting up early, if it were for nothing but to see the gradual waking of the day. I wish I could write poetry, Lucy! There are so many subtle and transient thoughts—so many deep and vague feelings that would go well in verse, but cannot be reduced to prose, and I feel sometimes such a longing to say what I feel and think!"

From the following extract we learn that she was planning further work. Two of the "Studies" were found completed after her death.

"I have an idea for some stories, but I cannot get time to write them—six unhappy marriages, not all the blame on him and not all on her—some of them simply incompatibility, and called generally *Studies of Him and Her* with sub-titles, the first, 'Awakened, or Out of the Doll's House'—not necessarily crime or vice but criss-cross views and want of discipline—want of submission. They are seething, but I cannot get them out of the pot!!!"

The next two extracts from letters of this date show that even in old age there was still left much of the effervescence so characteristic of her youth.

First, of her own sex—"I hate women as a race, Lucy. I think we are demons. Individually we are all right, but as a race we are monkeyish, cruel, irresponsible, superficial." This love of the individual and repudiation of the type was always asserting itself. For example, she writes in another letter, "I hate women who hunt, but I like the women I know who do." In the same way, towards the criminal classes, labelled as such by social necessity, she was pitiless, whilst for the criminal himself she had pity and pardon, a helping hand and a loosening of the purse-strings. She was actuated by the same wide humanity as was the present Warden of Merton, when he "laid down the law with great solemnity and gave private orders that it should *not* be

enforced." This is what she wrote in *The World Well Lost:* "It is only by experience and love that we come to that wider judgment which can see all round a thing, and which pities as much as it condemns—which pities more than it condemns."

So too in other matters. As her valued friend, Mr. John Stafford, writes to me, "It was not so much against individuals that her lance was levelled, as against the literary, artistic, and moral iniquities she conceived they represented. The very name of one of these arch-offenders would act as a sudden squall on a placid lake: it seemed, in other words, to hit her like a violent blow. The hot blood would rush to her face; her dilated eyes would blaze through her glasses; her hands (she had beautiful hands) would clench to veritable fists; and for some moments she would sit trembling and speechless. After that one's ears buzzed. At times it was terrible; but it was quickly over, and as often as not the storm would find its end in one of her charming little laughs, and she would turn, not without a *soupçon* of shame in her comely face, to another subject. No living man, I hope, ever dared to continue the previous one."

In another letter she effervesces over France and the Dreyfus case. "Of all the nations now living on the face of the earth, the French are the most contemptible—the most detestable, vain, hysterical, emotional, unreasonable, and always posing—entirely without spontaneity or self-forgetfulness. I hope Lord Salisbury will be firm about China *even to war.*"

The next letter shows how keenly she still loved nature, life, and knowledge, even when the general conditions were not of the cheeriest.

"The weather is certainly freezing. . . . Cold or warm, damp or dry, it hurts us in this best of all possible worlds! this in reality *loveliest* of all worlds!—Everything hurts us—the weather and the elements—wild beasts, insects, hidden causes of disease, drought, deluge—we are the mere footballs of matter, and we can make only our good out of it—the necessity of endeavour—endeavour being supposed to be

a finer thing than enjoyment — the fight with unfriendly conditions, a nobler exercise of power than the more placid and contented use of surplus energies. But we are here, Lucy, and *have* to make the best of it. . . . We are making such wonderful discoveries in the whole region of physiology as well as in other things, that we can place no limits. We have already such apparent miracles among us — the Röntgen rays, the new telegraphy, the photography of unseen stars, the limitation of the universe (unthinkable, but still seeming to be a fact), that we cannot say, No farther. We shall find out more and more as time goes on, and, as I believe will be, we get deeper convolutions of the brain, more of them, and more grey matter to work with!"

An Edinburgh reviewer lately said brilliantly and truly that "every man according to his ability must write his own decalogue," and those who knew Mrs. Linton best knew best that she not only wrote hers, but worked incessantly to live up to it. Courage, duty, and love were writ large in it, and through all the inconsistencies of her character shone conspicuous in her actions. I know she was compact of vehemence and tenderness, of hastiness and patience, of manly strength and womanly weakness, of self-depreciation and self-respect, of broad-mindedness and dogmatism, of tranquillity and passion. I know that all these incongruities appear curiously and undesignedly in her self-revelations, but I know, too, that there were certain simple and elemental virtues that she practised with more and more singleness of purpose the older she grew. And these, perhaps, will not prove the less acceptable because done

> Not with the hope of gaining heaven,
> Nor of escaping hell.

Here is part of her decalogue written in the next letter to her sister:—

"Do the right is *the* thing to do without the smallest reference to one's self, what one gets or what one loses, what is repaid, or what is not repaid. . . . I do believe in the law of duty and the absolute value of unselfishness. I think one

of the blots on the Christian religion is to do good to others that we may be rewarded—to think only of saving our own souls. The grand impersonal duty of the Stoics was more splendid, Lucy! and them my heart turns with love and reverence and desire to imitate. Sometimes a great rush of pent-up sorrow comes over me, and I am swept in the flood—swept down into the deep waters, Lucy, which close over me—for a time. And then I come up again and look into the face of the sun, and get on to dry land, and find life very well worth the living, so long as there is a sun to warm one and a flower to see, and a bit of human kindness to perform and the sweet warm days of summer to look forward to."

And how quick she was to discover the opportunities for these "bits of human kindness," one or two examples must suffice. On one occasion she found that her neighbour at table-d'hôte was deaf. The next night she provided herself with a tablet, and for the rest of their acquaintance kept him posted up in the conversation from which he was otherwise debarred.

Another phase of her kindliness which always compelled my admiration, knowing as I did her natural impatience, was the way in which she made it appear as though she suffered bores gladly—a humbling enough thought, it must be confessed, to many of those who prided themselves on her unstinted intercourse and unfaltering friendship!

Here is what Mr. Sargent, the hall-porter at Queen Anne's Mansions, writes to me on the subject of her thoughtfulness—

"Of course kindness to us all, and her punctuality, were things I noticed most in her. I don't believe she was five minutes late *once a year* for dinner or other numerous engagements. I well remember her first Christmas here, which shows her frankness and kindness to us. She said, 'Sargent, I want to make you all a little Christmas present. I can't afford much, you know, for I am not rich, and I have to work for my living the same as you do; but if I leave any one out, let me know, my friend, and I will rectify it.' And we miss her very much at Easter; every year she gave us new ties

to be worn on Easter Day, selecting mine herself with a request to be worn on Easter Sunday in remembrance of her. When leaving the Mansions she thanked me for my great kindness to her the years she had been here, and said, 'Sargent, I have left you £5 in my will, but as I shall no doubt make another one, I give you the £5 now, as I want to know that you have it.' She did not make another will, however, so I have received the £5 again since her decease."

Nor was this thoughtfulness confined to the period of her residence at the Mansions, when "tips" might have spelt bribes for better service. After she left, and to the end of her life, she continued these "fairings," and was instant in asking after the welfare of the commissionaires and other servants of the house.

But Mrs. Linton did not content herself with recognising those humbler workers who help to grease the wheels of life within sight and hearing. She realised that there are hundreds working in what may be called the basements of our social structure who get more kicks than ha'pence, whose existence is only realised when they fall short of perfection, and whose successes are accepted as mere matters of course. And, realising their existence, they must be heartened up with the rest. How many authors are there, I wonder, who ever give a thought to the printers and compositors otherwise than to anathematise their mistakes? But this was not Mrs. Linton's way. She insisted rather upon her indebtedness to them, and more than one "father of the chapel" has received from her generous sums of money for distribution among his journeymen.

Courtesy was also written large in her decalogue, and practised by her to the utmost. One day she had been the victim of a bit of unmannerliness, and she wrote to my wife—"It is not courtesy, as I hold courtesy from one gentle to another! So my head is rather high, and the vertebral column on which it is supported, and of which it is the last bone blown out into a bubbly kind of ball, is as stiff as stiff, and I think everybody very horrid, save you two and myself!!!"

In the next letter she enlarges on a favourite theme, and writes of religion as mainly a geographical expression.

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"BROUGHAM HOUSE, MALVERN,
27th January 1898.

"I grant the absolute need of religion as a system visible and imperative, and I acknowledge the existence of the spiritual life, but I think the forms we give the unseen divine are the necessities of our own human nature, which cannot jump off its own shadow nor travel beyond its own experience. But I think that conscience is the sense of duty and of right and wrong—apart from the conventional forms which obtain according to race, faith, time, and even latitude and longitude. I think that this is part of the scheme of human life, just as an advanced taste in art or dressing or manners. *Morals are integral to society*, and are part of the condition of humanity. . . . We should have them whether or not after a certain period of civilisation, and so, Loo, I stand and *wait*. Death will soon solve the mystery one way or the other. Meanwhile, in all the multiplying of faiths I cannot see which is the Absolute. Here is the R.C. who will not let his 'penitent' join in the family worship of a Protestant—here is the Protestant who will not use the symbols or join in the worship of an R.C.—a Churchman who will not dance with the Salvationist—a Plymouth Brother who thinks all the world save a very small remnant is to be damned—a Mohammedan who does the same by all but the Faithful—a Thug who worships his black goddess Kali by murder—a Zoroaster who prays to the sun—and so on, and so on; and then above us all is the Great Incommunicable First Cause to whom one is as dear a child as the other — who never made an elder branch . . . and never gave the Christian a charter of greater blessedness than the heathen. We are all, all, all His children, and He does not speak to us apart, but to us all in our own language, equally according to our age, that is our knowledge and our civilisation.

"To Him I live, and in Him I believe—but all the rest is dark."

The following letters explain themselves.

E. L. L. TO MR. WILLIAM WOODALL.

"BROUGHAM HOUSE, MALVERN,
26th January '98.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND AND ENEMY,—Welcome back to your native land! where I hope you have arrived resplendent in health and energy, and with a noble fund of patriotism.

"Would going down on my knees prevail on you and your wicked comrades not to hamper the Government at this critical time, and not to preach the doctrine of Scuttle and Knuckle Under? Oh, let us have the war and be done with it! Lop off one at least of the arms of the Russian Octopus; strike back at that insolent stout-boy Germany; spurn, as she deserves, France, the most contemptible nation of ancient or modern times. Be once more Englishmen whom nations feared to affront, when they were united, and before this cursed system of governing by party had killed all patriotism on both sides alike. . . .

"We have to go through the phase in which we are at present. We shall come to manhood suffrage and womanhood as well. We shall have mob rule heightened by the hysteria of the feminine element, and then—the saviour of society will appear with his 'mailed fist,' and we shall swing back to despotism and oppression.

"Human nature is a constant quantity, my dear W. W., M.P.! You nineteenth century men and women have not got a new charter, nor are you exempt from the logic of consequences. What has been will be again, and—'the mirror of the prophet hangs behind him.'—Affectionately yours,

"E. LYNN LINTON."

In replying to this letter, Mr. Woodall asked Mrs. Linton to say what Lord Salisbury and his colleagues had done in their conduct of foreign affairs, and especially in safe-guarding British interests, to entitle them to the exceptional confidence and abstention from criticism she demanded for them. A few days later came the rejoinder—

"BROUGHAM HOUSE,
7th February '98.

"MY DEAR MR. WOODALL,—I am broken-hearted! *Delenda est Carthago!* Ichabod! Ichabod! Who is to be trusted with the honour of England? No one! This cursed spirit of party government has killed all independent patriotism. The 'party' comes before the country, and a man is a Tory or a Liberal before he is an Englishman. It is not so close a system as the papacy, but it has the same essential defect. Depose Lord Salisbury, and where to find a stronger man on either side? Lord Rosebery? Sir William? Chamberlain might do. He is not afraid of responsibility as those others are, and I do not think would be afraid of war as every one else is. I know the next war will be the battle of Armageddon, and I know that we are not sure of how our new ships will behave; still, to recede as we do, step by step, inch by inch, to submit to the insults of Germany and America, and to the crafty encroachments of Russia—surely this is far worse than one supreme trial—a death struggle if you will—for the old supremacy under new conditions! We are all so afraid of death! What does it signify if we die to-day or to-morrow—if the individual goes for the sake of the nation? The *things* of life are before and beyond the individual, and national honour is of more value than a battalion of even our finest and most lovely men. Woman as I am, old and timid, I would give my life in torture to save the honour and majesty and dominion of England! Oh for some strong statesman! Some one with the wide vision of a Cæsar and the resolution of a Napoleon! Turn where we will, we have no one. Your party is riddled through and through with unworkable fads and unpatriotic formulæ—the Conservatives are wooden sticks painted to look like iron—the curse of weakness masked as humanitarianism is upon us, and the folly of an impracticable morality has eaten into our statesmanship. Altruism does not work well in the Foreign Office. 'The problem of how to carry on a government on the principles of the Sermon on the Mount, which has been founded on the breach of all the Ten Commandments,' has never been solved yet! and never will be. So good-bye, dear man. I am heart-sick, and as I say (patriotically)

heart-broken at these repeated humiliations. — Ever most affectionately yours, E. LYNN LINTON."

In the following letter we have a cat story worthy of the *Spectator*—

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"BROUGHAM HOUSE,
30th January '98.

"We had a fright with Miss Puss on Friday. It is a little bit of natural history for you, and one I did not know could have happened. She caught her first mouse and was highly delighted with it (I was not there), playing with it as cats do. Suddenly the mouse disappeared, and she began to cry—more like a child than a cat. I happened to go out into the kitchen with the letters, and they told me she must have swallowed the mouse whole and alive! So she had. I took her up in my arms, and her piteous face! Then I put her down, and she went under the table with her stomach on the floor and all legs out. I was obliged to go away, but they put her inside the fender for warmth and safety, and she stayed there for hours as if dead or dying. Her eyes were glazed, she took no notice of any one; when put down she was as if made of cotton-wool and could not stand, her feet were all limp, and she was just as if dead. But I ought to have told you that when I put her down and she went under the table, she had a violent shivering fit, shivered all over. Towards the evening, when the 'ladies' who came in had gone about six (this happened about two), I went into the kitchen and lifted her up and spoke to her. She opened her eyes and knew me, and I petted her and put her on the table for a little milk. She lapped a little, but could not stand, so we put her into the fender again, and by the next morning she had digested her elephant and was as well as ever. But it was a hard nut for her to crack —a live mouse, not broken up, not masticated, fur, tail, paws, ears, and all, all swallowed whole and alive! No wonder she cried, poor little thing, and no wonder she went nearly dead with the effort of digesting such a lump of solid meat! The gardener, who was here, said he had known of the same thing before with young cats. They want the mother

to teach them how to deal with their mice! But no one knows whether she swallowed poor mouse of her own free will, or by accident, or if mouse in her terror jumped down the open throat. All we know is the result—and the fact."

In the next letter the reader will find some justification for the attempt that has been made in this book to show Mrs. Linton as she was. There has been no hesitation in chronicling her defects as well as her virtues, nor has the rôle of apologist been assumed. I have remembered what she wrote when animadverting on Lady Burton's *Life* of her husband—

"I have ever said a man must stand or fall by his own life, and the greatest indignity that can be done to his memory is to interfere with the integrity of his principles expressed and acknowledged during his lifetime."

This indignity at least has not been passed upon her. At the same time it must be admitted that, in leaving, as far as has been possible, one so impetuous and so outspoken to tell her own story, there may have been some lack of justice.

Passionate and enthusiastic as she was, she often gives herself away to those pale-faced, white-livered critics who have never known what passion and enthusiasm mean—those moral and intellectual teetotallers who have never let the wine of life pass their lips—

> Too dull to feel depression,
> Too hard to heed distress;
> Too cold to yield to passion
> Or silly tenderness.

The thumbs of these of course will go down, but I am sanguine that the majority of her judges will show a better discrimination and read between the lines.

Her intimates know that she was noble, true, tender-hearted, brave, and generous. These loved her, not because her life was a piece of unswerving logic, but because she was very woman in her inconsistencies. They loved her, not despite, but because of the fact that she was too generous not to be imposed upon, too open-handed to be economical, human enough to be compact of weakness and strength.

E. L. L. TO MRS. GEDGE.

"BROUGHAM HOUSE,
3rd February 1898.

"I *have* read *Tennyson's Life*, Lucy, and I told you so, and recommended it to you. It is a very sweet picture of a very lovely life, but of course it is imperfect because of what it *does not* say. No man's character is so entirely without shade, without even the hint of minor faults. A son could scarcely have chronicled the defects—but the result is like Queen Elizabeth's face, when she refused to let the painter put a shadow to her nose. The whole is a lovely, lovely outline—lovely—and is as good as a sermon. I do not agree with your dislike of biographies, Loo. I love them, and history too. We do not read half enough history. If we read more we should have a truer sense of the continuity of human life, and how time never causes the break of power, nature, and habits which it has pleased people to imagine. Man has been always man, as he is now, with improved mental and mechanical powers, improved morals and social instincts in excess of egotistical desires, and improved *international* ideas of common rights, so that one strong nature has no right to swallow up a weaker for the mere lust of conquest, as in the old days before international law established itself as the police of correction; but beyond all this man is man as he was in the days of Pericles and Julius Cæsar, of Xerxes and Scipio."

On 6th February she again refers to Tennyson, evidently in answer to something Mrs. Gedge has remarked about the portraits.

"I do not think Tennyson's face is discontented, Loo, so much as thoughtful. A thoughtful face is never a jocund one. It is always grave and sad. He was a striver after better work and still better, but though deeply thoughtful and keenly alive to the moral and mental difficulties of life, he had made the whole thing so far clear to himself that he could say, All is for the best. Well for those who can double down the blood-red edges and say this, Lucy! who can with one breath say benevolence and love and fatherhood, with the next recount the massacres and horrors of the past, the

cruelty of nature all through, and recognise the dominion of pain and sorrow, suffering and death. I prefer the riddle unsolved and insoluble, but I could not say, All is for the best. I can only say the mystery of life, as we have it, is a mystery I, for one, cannot solve nor explain away into the rule of mercy and love."

The next letter shows how hard she still was upon herself in the matter of work. The article referred to was published posthumously and anonymously in *Temple Bar*.

"Lucy dear, I can write only a shabby note to-day, for my head is swimming, and I am almost blind. From 9.30 until now, Lucy, 4.30, have I been finishing my article on Parallels for the *Fortnightly* to look at. I took only twenty minutes for my luncheon, and I wrote two letters. . . . I should have gone out had not this paper pressed. It is a very curious paper, *I* think—the sweepings up of all my readings this last winter — the parallels of character and events and literary passages such as I came across. It is very fragmentary, of course. It could be nothing else for a magazine article!"

CHAPTER XXIV

1898 (CONTINUED)

AT this time it was my privilege to pass on to Mrs. Linton such books as I was finding particularly interesting. Her appetite for them was unappeasable. She devoured them with the voracity of one in the prime of life and mental digestion. It hardly mattered what it was. Whilst she was reading all that I could provide her with, she was puzzling her friend, Mr. A. R. Waller, the publisher, by asking for information about the most out-of-the-way books on the most abstruse questions. Just now she was eager for anything on the subject of Greek philosophy and mysticism. Other books which she was tackling with enthusiasm and carefully annotating were Polybius's *History of the Roman War with Carthage and Sicily*, Procopius's *Secret History of the Time of Justinian and Theodora*, her friend Mrs. Hamilton's masterly translation of Gregorovius's *History of Rome in the Middle Ages*, and Romanes's *Animal Intelligence*.

She was an extraordinarily rapid reader, and, like Lord Macaulay, seemed to grasp the meaning of a page without differentiating the words.

E. L. L. TO G. S. LAYARD.

"*8th February* 1898.

"I *knew* there was something I wanted to say to you yesterday, and in the intervals of silence I was routing about the wool of my brain, but the thought was lost—overlaid, hidden—and I could not unearth him. When you had gone, he leapt out and mocked me. It was to say how much I enjoyed your storiettes.

"How strange those old trials are! but in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries we had more justice, and a finer, clearer sense of evidence and legality, than the French have to-day. And how history repeats itself! That trial of the brother-in-law for the poisoning of his wife's brother is just the original for the same kind of thing of late—Lampson, do you remember? The evidence given would not have hanged him to-day. And this trial shows what we owe to vivisection and experiments on the living animal (especially in toxicology), by the wonderful advance we have made in medical science. The Grey trial I had never come across at all. How strange it was! I wonder how it ended for *her*. Her marriage with that Thomas man was evidently a blind, and he was thought to be a complaisant husband. No wonder her father called her 'hussy,' poor thing! and no wonder she did not want to go home. The mother's wisdom is very pathetic and natural. But how I love the stately old forms of speech! Not for myself—I should hate to have to use them—but to read them all rustling with brocade and stiff with gold lace! . . . Your friend and book-leech, E. L. L."

Again, I had lent her *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, just published anonymously, and had suggested that the author was Oscar Wilde.

E. L. L. TO G. S. LAYARD.

"It does not read like Oscar Wilde in method—only one word, 'wine-red,' seems to point at him. The diction is simpler and less sensuous—more direct and more manly—than his in general, though of course the subject is as perverted as ever. It is all pity for the man who murdered the 'thing he loved'—who took from her love of the sunlight and the glory of the free breath of heaven—all excuse for crime, and pity for the criminal, but none for the victim—like Pater's moan over 'those two poor young boys' whose brief lives had been chronicles of crime, but for the respectable man—husband, father, master, citizen, and they so cruelly murdered, let them go! It *may* be Oscar's—but I do not recognise the affected, artificial, Assyrian-monarch kind of touch he used to affect."

Again I had sent her a volume of State Trials.

E. L. L. TO G. S. LAYARD.

"DEAREST REX AND KING OF HEARTS,—I am more sorry than I can say that the foul fiend Flue has got you, and I need not say how earnestly, lovingly, anxiously I hope your fytte will be a short one and soon over, leaving no sequelæ, which always looks a misprint for squeals! I shall hear of you as the days go by, and E. knows that if there is *anything* I can say or do that will pleasure you, she has but to give me a hint—anything, Rex, short of walking up to the top of the Beacon, or standing on my head like some one in *Alice in Wonderland*, but I forget who—oh, old Father William!

"I send back the Trials. . . . I remember so well the Ferrers trial, and how our father improved the occasion and lectured us girls on the iniquity of the whole proceeding, till I felt as if I had just escaped falling into the same abyss of lies and deception. I remember it so well! and the *tracasserie* about the bonnet. It is all very interesting, every trial, and I think poor Beau Fielding, for all that he was a scamp, had very hard lines dealt out to him.

"I have begun a *Queen* article to-day, 'That Cap and Belt.' Did you know, what I have only just learnt, the tradition that, after he had escaped from the cave of Polyphemus, Ulysses wanted to go back for his cap and belt left behind? I found it in Polybius. When the one thousand Achæan hostages had dwindled down to three hundred, after sixteen years' exile and imprisonment, they had their freedom granted them chiefly by a sarcastic word of Cato in the Senate, 'Are we to sit here all day, debating whether a few old Greek dotards are to be buried by Italian or Achæan hands?' After their full release Polybius wanted a few more concessions, whereon Cato significantly reminded him of 'Ulysses who wanted to go back to the cave of the Cyclops for his cap and belt.' We often lose the greater for the less—the dog and the shadow and the bit of meat—the lion's mouth and the safe exit and fatal return, etc. etc. But the legend was new to me. I wish we had a book of old Greek and Latin proverbs, and their meaning and when they arose. 'Nothing without Theseus' is one, 'Tell it to the Twelve Powers,' another. Who were the Twelve Powers?

"Tell E. she may tear her hair with envy. I have three loads of gravel in my back garden, and two men at work on the same. I feel baronial, George! and also a new spiræa bought at the door for 1s. 9d.

"Good-bye, George, beloved and best.—Yours and E.'s loving friend, E. L. L."

It is with some hesitation that I have allowed Mrs. Linton's terms of endearment to stand, but it would, I think, be false modesty to suppress them. At the same time, it should be understood that she addressed most of her friends and acquaintances with like superlatives.

The following extract shows her passion for tidiness:—

"I was out in the front garden and on the roadway, Lucy, at 8.30. Our new neighbours opposite had the dust-cart early. . . . So the wind was blowing, and it blew off some of the papers, and the Betsey Trotwood woke up in me like a lion on the prowl, and I busked and bounced, and I went downstairs like a flash, and out of the garden stalks I and on to the road and up to the cart, and I says, 'My men, you'll be very careful, won't you, of all the paper and mess, and pick it all up and sweep the roadway clear?' So they says, says they, 'Yes, m'm; there's a lot of this here mess, and we have to come with another cart.' All the neighbours . . . are so much obliged to me for my Betsey Trotwoodism—for I look after the bits of paper like a tiger!"

The following letter to the Vicar of Malvern was dictated by a determination not to sail under false colours. Deeply as Mrs. Linton valued Mr. Pelly's friendship, she felt bound to risk its loss by fearlessly stating her position, though, I need hardly say, any anxiety on that score was quite unnecessary. In the same way I know she had dared to risk the loss of Mr. W. E. Henley's friendship, which she highly valued, by remonstrating with him for publishing Mr. Murray Gilchrist's "Basilisk" in the *National Observer*. Not that she was by any means straitlaced, but she was quick to draw the line where publication of anything seemed to her harmful to the public. It was part of her religion never to shrink from having the courage of her opinions. Sometimes,

no doubt, her enthusiasm for truth made her appear more of an irreconcilable than she really was.

E. L. L. TO REV. RAYMOND PELLY.

"BROUGHAM HOUSE, MALVERN,
1st March 1898.

"DEAREST MR. PELLY,—I was so very sorry when I came in yesterday to find that you had been. I was not able to go to church on Sunday, for the carriage did not come, and I was so sorry, for I knew you preached! I do not pretend to be a hypocrite, and say I agree with your sermons intellectually. I do not think my intellectual doubts will ever be laid to rest; they seem part of the very fibre of my brain; but I feel the value of that inner striving after truth and good that you rouse in me, to the highest point any clergyman has ever done. I cannot reconcile the facts of Judaism and Christianity with my idea of a Great Father. All religions are so unjust to others, and so partial to their own. Why, even the genial Greek gave the best place in his melancholy Hades to the initiated—and see what Mohammed preached, and the Roman Catholics, and the Calvinists, and the Plymouth Brethren! It is all so human—so 'made on earth'—like this proposed beatification of Cardinal Newman, whom the papacy neglected for his lifetime, and now wants to make one of the blessed. Was it not Wicliffe who said, 'God does not force men to believe what they cannot understand'? and I cannot understand a *one* religion as the sole claim to eternal life. Would you cast off one of your sons because he made himself an artist, say, when you wanted him to be something else? I have two servants, of whom I love one far, far, far more than the other, but I make no difference between them, and never let the one I do not love so much feel out in the cold, and I am only a poor, weak, passionate woman!

"Gratefully, respectfully, with my whole heart of hearts, *lovingly*, your unworthy parishioner,

"E. LYNN LINTON."

Again, I had sent her Burke's *Vicissitudes of Families*.

The beginning of the letter reminds one irresistibly of

Jasper's pronouncement in *Lavengro*—"Life is sweet, brother. . . . There's day and night, brother, both sweet things; sun, moon, and stars, all sweet things; there's likewise a wind on the heath."

E. L. L. TO G. S. LAYARD.

"BROUGHAM HOUSE,
4th March '98.

"GEORGE REX,—Life is *very* lovely! I am so glad that I have that strain of mindless enjoyment in me which finds a real pleasure in a flower, a ray of sunlight across the hills, the changing colours of the trees, the glory of a sunset and sky, or the snap-song of a bird! I think the faculty for enjoyment must be a special thing, like capacity for art or music, poetry or literature. Still, I never feel it to be a very respectable faculty, George! It is a low, mean, sensual, superficial kind of thing — a mere love for mental and intellectual lollipops and toys! All the same, it is a valuable item in one's possession, a real talisman when packed up in life's wallet, though made out of rags and bones, and sticks and stones, and snippets of all sorts, like an African Greegreeman's medicine.

"George, have you seen the discovery of the tomb of Osiris? I am immensely interested in it—excited in my secret soul. It makes for one of my central principles—the continuity of human nature — the likeness of human inventions, and the sameness of thought — the old circle traversed again and again on the exact lines, but by wayfarers dressed in different colours and speaking different languages. There was a great mystery hidden in the death of Antinous. His moral character was vilified, and his name and influence were feared by the Christians of the second and third centuries; for his history came too near to their idea of sacrifice to be spiritually comfortable. But this tomb of Osiris and all that it reveals of the same idea are instructive, G. R.!

"Thank you for the Burke; I have read the first volume, but I have sundry extracts to make which will take another day. Then will come the second, out of which I shall probably have to extract more marrow—like Rabelais's dog—and then you will have them back. Some of the men who ruined

themselves by their brutal extravagance were surely mad—Jack Mytton one of them! The Irish, too, have only themselves to thank for their ruin—that Wm. Wray who made the road over the mountain and horsed his friend's carriage with his own bullocks—and those two dear girls, the laundresses! They were angels. I am always glad when women come out nobly as women, in a womanly way. Then I bend my knee and kiss their hands and gladly own their sweet supremacy. But the New Hussies! No, George — not for this Joseph! Here are two toads celebrated in to-day's paper as having cycled in knickerbockers to the polling booth, to be jeered at by the rabble—and then there is the case of the maidservant and her cigarettes. . . . Your loving subject and grateful

"BOOK LEECH."

On sending back the book, she wrote—

"Herewith I return the Burke with many, many thanks and a few quite unnecessary heartaches over the vicissitudes of the great. It is heart-aching reading! and one feels so thankful for one's own bite and sup and wobbly old roof-tree. As for me, I am cocky-whoopy beyond measure, for my banker wrote to me on Saturday and told me he had invested £200 in Marshall and Snelgrove's 4½ debentures. Now I did not know I had £200 at my back unwanted, and I did not know till to-day that M. and S.'s debentures were scarce to be had for love or money, and that I might hold myself lucky to possess them. So far, you see, I am not on the high road to vicissitudes as per examples cited! . . .

"Mr. Pelly's sermon yesterday had no mythology in it, no debatable bits, but was a pure bit of pure religion, the word of a leader of souls pointing out the best way for those souls to follow in their search for truth, light, and God.

"My church yesterday cost me 6s.—2s. to go, 1s. 6d. offertory, 2s. 6d. to come back in the snow, the extra 6d. a thank-offering to Allsop (the coachman) for his care and thought of me!!!

"My reading to-night will be a few pages of the Koran and a few pages of Voltaire. The Koran is very

interesting — but oh, the milk in the cocoanut! It is so queerly disjointed and non-sequential, far more so than the Epistles, and they have their full share of that milk in the cocoanut."

Of her physical condition and surroundings at this time she writes to her friend Mrs. Moir—

"Of myself all I can say is that I am here in complete solitude, old, without strength, but in fairly good health, and quite content and happy. I left the world before it left me, and I am glad I took my resolution as I did. I live in a small house with a small, costly, and unpicturesque garden, and I regret nothing but my lost friends and my lost youth."

And again to Miss Ada Gedge—

"I have had to give up one thing after another of old habits and old enjoyments. Fight as long as we may, Ada, Old Age at last conquers us, and we have to submit.

"My little pussie is my great plaything here. She does not now dare to scratch me as Mary lets her scratch and bite *her*. If she forgets herself, she puts back her ears and crouches down her head, knowing that she will be *spatted* vigorously. I have made her let me quietly stroke her closed claws by saying 'Gently! gently!' else if I touched her feet out came her diabolical little claws, which in a jiffy she would have dug into my flesh. . . . I pet her a good deal. I have nothing else to pet! and she at least is happy. And oh, it is a joy to me to see and know that any one or anything is happy in this 'life of error, ignorance, and strife.'"

Twelve years before, she had written in *Christopher Kirkland*—

"Old, grey-headed, alone—my passions tamed, my energy subdued, my hope dead, my love futile—I sit in the darkening twilight and think over the problem of existence and what it has taught me. So far, all my sorrows and disappointments have been of this good to me: They have broken down the masterful passion of my temperament, and crushed out of me the egotistical desire of personal happiness with which I began my career. Life has shown me that this personal happiness

comes to us in fullest quantity when we give most and ask least; and that in the pain of renunciation itself is the consolation which is born of strength. It is only the weak who demand; the strong give—and in that giving shape for themselves the diadem which others ask from a beneficent fate and a generous fortune.

"No age is too old for this outflowing of love. When the day is spent aud the sun has gone down, the lustreless earth radiates its stored energy of heat into the night. And the old, who need care, can return gratitude, and while they accept consideration can bestow sympathy. I, who say this, say it with full knowledge of all that my words imply. I, who advocate the generous gift of love and the patient tenderness of altruism, speak from the door of no full storehouse, but rather from among the ruins of an empty and dismantled home. I do not, like some wealthy woman, married to the man she loves and the mother of children she adores, preach content with poverty and ascetic self-suppression to the poor wretch shivering and starving in the streets — to the heart-broken lover burning in the fever of despair on the other side of that impassable gulf. The catalogue of my possessions holds very little from which to gather joy or on which to found content. And yet I have both."

And now here she was twelve years later living up to her ideal, prodigal of love and helpfulness to all around her, patient under her sufferings, overflowing with gratitude for the smallest kindness which others would have taken thanklessly as their justly due, and, most wonderful of all, contented and happy in herself and still eagerly in love with life.

To those who saw most of her in these last years, she seemed anything but old. Hers was no "dreary maturity" which set one regretting that "in these ruins a flower had *once* flourished." We did not think of her as one who had grown old gracefully, but as one who had never grown old at all. We did not love her for what she had been, but for what she was. She lived in the present, not in the past, and hid from us the useless regrets of age, as another would hide its wrinkles.

Towards the end of April she journeyed up to London, and we in Malvern never saw her again.

E. L. L. TO MRS. G. S. LAYARD.

"111 INVERNESS TERRACE, BAYSWATER, W.,
Sunday, 25th April '98.

"This is just a word to tell you that I am here, and already more than half dead. I think this will be my last visit to London. I know too many people, and they are all too kind to me, and I am torn to pieces—and I cannot stand it, dear! Willing is the spirit, and the old warhorse neighs and pricks up her ears at the familiar sound of the trumpet; but the flesh is very weak, and the poor old limbs fail, and the poor old spirit has to own itself beaten.

"I am beaten to-day—after the private view of the New Gallery and all the people. I am going out to lunch with Lady Lewis, and then to make a round—oh dea' me! If I were but at home in my little shanty, and the dear Queen and Rex came in for a wee talky!—and here I am unable to sleep for fatigue and excitement, and without enough resisting power to bear and recover!!!—

"To-morrow I am going to Kate Reilly about a dress!!!—I shall be lovely. God bless dear, dear people.—Their loving old Rag,

"E. LYNN LINTON."

On 3rd May she moved on to Queen Anne's Mansions.

At the Authors' dinner of this year she was again given the place of honour, and the spectacle of the authoress of *Under which Lord* hobnobbing on the best of terms with the late Bishop of London was not without humour and significance.

E. L. L. TO G. S. LAYARD.

"Q. A. MANSIONS,
9th May 1898.

". . . My dinner, Authors', went off fine. I looked like the Queen of Sheba. I had another one yesterday. Mr.

and Mrs. Gully, Mr. and Mrs. Labouchere, and Zangwill. I was between Mr. Labouchere and Zangwill, and talked politics to the one and philosophy to the other, and I had a fine time of it. Zangwill is going to *convert me to some form of religion through my intellect.* To-day I have been to see Father K——. *He* would convert me to Romanism if he could. He is a very dear fellow, with the waxen skin of an ascetic.

"The bishop was very nice at the dinner, and so was Lord Welby. I was between both, and the bishop did not seem to think me a pariah. 'Col. John Hay' was on his other side, so I sent him a message by my lord to say that I knew by heart all *Jim Bludsoe* and *Little Breeches.* He bowed and smiled, and after dinner shook hands with me; and I said, 'I shake hands with the author of *Jim Bludsoe,* not the Ambassador. I care most for "Col. John Hay,"' and he laughed and looked pleased. Best love to you all.—The faithful LEECH and LOVER.

"*P.S.—The Dreamers of the Ghetto* is sublime, but what a frightful inheritance of cruelty, tyranny, and narrowness the Ghetto has left us! What a martyrdom man has gone through for the sake of the Myth of Eden and the responsibility with which he has been saddled—the responsibility for all the sin and suffering of the world inherent in the very nature of things! I told Father K—— to-day that my religion was the self-respecting, magnanimous, large religion of the Stoics—those men with a stiff backbone who neither grovelled nor truckled—'the religion of ethics.' He said 'Yes'—

"I shall have such lots to tell you and talk about when I am once more at home and all this swirl and rush and excitement are over!"

Her account of the function is well supplemented by the following valuable note which I have been fortunate enough to obtain from Mr. Rider Haggard:—

"The last time I met her," he writes, "was at the 'Authors' Dinner,' I think in the year of her death. After the speeches we sat together in a corner of the room, and I asked her how she was. To this she replied that in health she felt quite well, but that a wonderful change had taken place in her

mind, for now she seemed no longer to belong to the world. If I remember right, the metaphor she used was that she felt like one seated on a precipice watching a torrent brawling beneath her—the torrent of humanity, which for her had no longer any meaning, but was a mere confusion of voices and of battling desires, hopes, and fears—wherein she had no share.

"At this time she seemed to know that she would not live long; to realise with extraordinary distinctness the utter vanity of human life, of success and failure, and all we strive to reach; and to face its ending without fear.

"That long and, considering its gay surroundings, curious conversation impressed me much, and when I said good-night to her it was for the last time.

"In my long friendship with her I always found her a most honourable and upright lady, very kind-hearted, though at times she could be bitter with her pen, rather contradictory in her views, or in the expression of them; and somewhat undiscerning in her estimate of acquaintances. She was, in my opinion, one of the very ablest and keenest intellects of her time, and will, I think, be reckoned in its history."

On 13th May she wrote to Mrs. Pelly—

"All of my own generation are passing into the 'Great Beyond,' and a very few years now will see us laid to rest for ever. I do not fear death myself—not the least in the world—but I do not like to see the fine vigorous intellects and bodily powers of my dear friends lose in volume and strength. Still it has to be, if we live long enough; but the dregs come badly after the rich wine!"

From London she went for a short visit to her friend Mrs. Mills at Newbie, Bowdon, Cheshire. From there she wrote—

E. L. L. TO REV. W. DUTHOIT.

"*May* '98.

"MY DEAR MR. DUTHOIT,—I was in London when your dear letter came, and I was too hurried and worried and

tossed and torn to answer it. I am now at a friend's house in Cheshire, where I have come for a fortnight; then I go back to London for another fortnight, and then to my own little home, which is my little haven of rest and quiet and (now) domestic peace and affection, and where I am *completely* happy in a way which makes my friends open their eyes with wonder how, after such a brilliant social life, I can subside into solitude without a murmur or a regret. But age brings philosophy, when it does not bring religion. All life seems to me so transitory, and the things we strive for when young are so intrinsically valueless, save when of the highest degree, by which we secure an immortality of fame and influence! But for us of the mere floating crowd of undistinguished individuals, what does it all matter? Nothing lasts for long, and nothing solves the mystery. All I care for now is to do my duty to my neighbour; to be generous and kindly and charitable in thought, word, and deed; to make peace where I can, and to be scrupulous as to my speech; not to say one unkind word of others; to live the ethical life as sincerely as if I believed it would result in conscious individual good; and to do my duty as I conceive it, for duty's sake alone. More than this I cannot get to! There is such a thing as duty; we evolve it as we go on in civilisation and the increase of the moral sense and social virtues, just as we evolve a higher taste in colours, in architecture, in music. Why, or to what ultimate end independent of the well-being of society, I, blind and dark as I am, cannot pretend to say. I only feel in my inner being that I MUST be faithful to my sense of duty. It is a higher law somehow or somewhere laid on me; and I obey it as a blind man is led by the hand of the seeing guide. For the rest it is all blank and dark! I see no light behind 'that terrible curtain.' I do not think one religion better than another, and I think the Christian has brought far more misery, crime, and suffering, far more tyranny and evil, than any other. From Constantine's time and the massacres of Arians here and Athanasians there; from the popes and their lies, aggressions, forgeries, and murders; from the Inquisition and the Smithfield burnings, the persecution of heretics and witches, the Spaniards in South America, and the determined opposition of the Church to all advancement in knowledge; from the earliest days to the present moment, when Rome is foment-

ing the troubles in Italy, and the poor dear Queen of Spain puts her trust in the blessing of the pope and in prayers, I see no divinity. The morality of the Christian religion is impracticable, and the definite promises have not been fulfilled. And so I stand and wait till the final act, when I shall see or I shall sleep for ever, and become one with the dumb, blind, unconscious forms of the world whence I and all of us came into conscious life. Meanwhile I love and reverence those who have faith!—and I love and reverence *you*. My dear, good, valued friend, all happiness be yours.—Affectionately your grateful and sincere E. LYNN LINTON."

From much that has gone before it will be apparent that Mrs. Linton had a genius for friendship, and that friendship with her was by no means a "matter of streets." Unfortunately this great quest of her later years was too often destined to disappointment. She had to pay the penalty for her impulsiveness, her warm-heartedness, her capacity for seeing the best side of people at first. The incarnation of loyalty herself, she looked for the same in those to whom she became attached. Wishing to pass the highest encomium upon an eminent poet, one of her dearest friends, she one day said to Mr. Mackenzie Bell, "He doesn't change his opinion of friends after they are dead."

So long as she found in them this one essential, it hardly mattered what they said or did, whether their boots creaked or their gloves or morals misfitted. But let them fail in loyalty, and there was no reprieve. "I must kill my sorrow or it will kill me," she would say. And then, to the accompaniment of Landor-like denunciations, the offensive thing was swept from her life—wiped off the slate.

Emotion she held higher than art. Intellect she worshipped; love and friendship she adored. And, adoring them as she did, she preferred to be found guilty of "gushing" rather than forego its undoubted advantages. Early in life she had learnt by bitter experience that "we are not so transparent as we imagine ourselves to be, and that what we *do* and not what we *feel* is the rule by which we are measured." With Robert Louis Stevenson, she felt that we are all apt to be too sparing of assurances, and that

"Cordelia is only to be excused by Regan and Goneril in the same nursery." Thus it was that where she felt affection, she was deliberately and sometimes disconcertingly affectionate.

Here is what she says of friendship in her next letter to her sister—

"*21st May.*

"People say old people make no new friends. It is a pity when they do not. It is the only thing to stave off senility of mind, to make new friends and to keep one's sympathies alive and sharp for all that goes on."

Which reminds one unavoidably of Dr. Martineau's fine saying, "God only lends us the objects of our affections; the affections themselves He gives us in perpetuity."

In the same letter is an appreciation of Mr. Gladstone, whose prolonged agony was just over.

"His personality will always remain a national splendour. He was a rarely gifted man intellectually and physically. He got a twist of late years, and he was a very bad patriot, a slack imperialist, but as a man he was magnificent. We have no such masterly intellect left among us now. Better statesmen, better patriots, yes—but finer intellects, No!—I wonder if the family will consent to the Westminster Abbey interment. With all his faults of government he was no snob, and not in the least self-seeking. His hands were emphatically *clean*, and he perpetrated no job nor the shadow of one for his family's sake. He aggrandised no one belonging to him, and made no money by the back stairs. It is all very interesting at present, the war and all that happens about us. Life is lovely to me yet, and full of interest and love."

By the end of May she was back in London, occupying the rooms of her friend Mrs. Dobie in Queen Anne's Mansions. The following extract from a letter to my wife refers to the purchase of a brougham:—

"I saw to my carriage—or rather *a* carriage. It is not so light or smart or fly-away or superior as I had dreamt of.

It is a solid, handsome-looking, heavy, dowager old fellow, with a broad step—so broad that you can put your two feet on it—and was built for an ancient lady and one who had stiff joints, and it is £60—all done up—new tyres to the wheels, a strong break, revarnished, the crest painted out and my illustrious monogram painted in—but before I close with it Mrs. More and I are to drive in it on Wednesday to see how it runs. The coachbuilders (they are those large Oxford Street fellows, Laurie & Marner) build for Lady Emily Foley, and know the Malvern country very well. They have also built two carriages for Mr. More and one for his son. But I shall know more when I have tried the carriage on Wednesday. . . . I hope to return on the 9th, and shall go and see you *hot-pot*. I shall not have 'my carriage' by then, so I can afford to be 'umble. When I am carriage company on my own account! la! oh, la! the world won't hold me! My crest will reach up to the stars!"

On the evening of the 9th we walked over to Brougham House to welcome her home, but were met by the disappointing news that she had postponed her return. Her little house had got a clean face, and her little garden was brighter than ever before, but, alas! its dear mistress was never to see it again.

Here are extracts from some of her last letters:—

E. L. L. TO MRS. SWANN.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
9th June 1898.

"I have allowed myself to be persuaded into staying till Friday the 17th. There is to be a large dinner given by the (young) New Vagabonds to the Old Stagers (Mr. Traill the guest of the evening), and as I am the oldest woman stager of all, they wanted me, especially as I have been such an enemy to so many of the classes in the New School; so I am staying, but on Friday I hope to see my dear little home once more, and my garden and flowers, and my pusskin."

E. L. L. TO MRS. G. S. LAYARD.

"QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS,
9th June 1898.

"I am sorry to say I shall not be at home till to-morrow week, the 17th. I have been persuaded to stay till the 17th, to go to the dinner given by the New Vagabonds to the Old Stagers. But I have caught a cold, of course, and I have been ill and in bed, and coughing and horrid since Sunday night. It came on all in a minute, and I have been quite ill. But I got up on Tuesday and went out to a dinner made for me, and I had some friends here yesterday to tea. And now I am shut up and not allowed out in a 'kerridge' even. I was asked to the Royal Society Soirée last evening. Sir William and Lady Crookes would have taken me, so I should have been well companioned; but Lord love ye! my dear doctor would have murdered me if I had gone, and I should have died of cold if he had not! But to have heard and seen and realised this new disintegration of the once compacted element, the atmospheric air! It was a cruel temptation!"

On the 11th she wrote to Mrs. Gedge—

"It is such a lovely day, but I do not feel very well able to enjoy it, Lucy. I am weak and wankle with night cough. I get on in the day, but the cough at night is apeish. I do nothing but cough—cough—cough—all through the long hours, and then in the day I am *done for*—as to-day. It is such a lovely day, too, and I have no energy to go out, and no desire to go, but —— has just been here and wishes me to go, so I must hire a kerridge, as I have no more power in my feet than a sick kitten. . . . I am very forlorn at the present moment, and wish I was at Malvern. Oh, don't I just!"

Later in the day she drove out for the last time, and on her return felt so ill that she went straight to bed. She was attended by her friend Dr. Kiallmark, who had been her medical adviser for twenty years. The illness had originated with a chill taken at the Private View of the Royal Academy, and now developed into an attack of

bronchial pneumonia. Through this she was devotedly nursed by Mrs. Hartley and Mrs. Dobie. But the vital powers were exhausted, and she succumbed on Thursday, the 14th July 1898, to a general failure of the system.

From the beginning she seems to have realised that her illness would prove fatal, and she faced the inevitable with admirable stoicism.

"When one has to die," she had once said, "let it be with decorum. To fight for the reprieve which will not come, to cry out for the mercy which will not be shown, advantages no one. Better the silent acceptance of the blow—and forgiveness of the executioner."

Often had she held her breath, listening to the Juggernaut wheels of fate as they drew nearer and nearer, and now when they were upon her there was never a sign of flinching. It was the price that had to be paid for the joy of life that had been hers—and it was rest, too, after the sorrow.

Her remains were cremated, and on the 30th September were interred, in the presence of many of her friends, in the churchyard of her beloved Crosthwaite at the foot of her father's grave, north-east of the church.

At the conclusion of the service, in which the Rev. Augustus Gedge, Mrs. Linton's brother-in-law, took part, Canon Rawnsley gave an address concluding with these words—

"Her desire to get people to work whilst it is called to-day, and to do rather than dream, in some measure made her less firm to believe with a sure and certain hope in the great Beyond. But

> There lives more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds.

"It was an article of her faith that man's thirst for knowledge was a thing Divine, a gift of God Himself. Now she has entered that fuller light, and is wise with that larger knowledge, and we leave her ashes in peace, with a sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life."

She herself, we know, had not the "sure and certain

hope" which comforted her friends. To quote her own written words—

"Pain, grief, joy, sickness and health, the glad day and the perfumed night—she knows them no more. Alone with herself she has passed the dread barrier, and now knows what no man knoweth—or she sleeps in the eternal sleep of that 'nirvana' where the things of time and space are not."

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

NAMES OF THE CHILDREN OF JAMES AND ALICIA LYNN

JAMES NARBOROUGH GLASSE, born 1806.
CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH, born 1807.
GEORGE GOODENOUGH, born 1809, married (1) Hon. Mrs. Fraser, (2) Miss Henrietta Naters.
SOPHIA ANNE, born 1810, married (1) Captain William Murray, (2) Mr. James Stanger.
ARTHUR THOMAS, born 1812, married.
JOHN MAGNUS, born 1813, married (1) Miss Mary Ann Ford, (2) Miss Mary Hume Thompson.
ROSE CECILIA, born 1814, married Rev. James Murray.
SAMUEL GOODENOUGH, born 1815, married.
LAURA, born 1817, married Captain Zachery Mudge Mallock.
EDMUND GOODENOUGH, born 1819.
LUCY FAKENHAM, born 1820, married Rev. Augustus Gedge.
ELIZABETH, born 1822, married William James Linton.

APPENDIX B

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

TO

ELIZA LYNN ON HER "AMYMONE"

HIGH names, immortal names have women borne;
In every land her amaranthine crown
Virtue hath placed upon the braided brow;
In many, courage hath sprung up and shamed
The stronger man's unbrave audacity;
In many, nay in all, hath wisdom toucht
The fairer front benignly, and hath kist
Those lids her lessons kept from their repose.
Only for Hellas had the Muses dwelt
In the deep shadow of the gentler breast,
To soothe its passion or repeat its tale.
They lived not but in Hellas. *There* arose
Erinna, *there* Corinna, *there* (to quench
The torch of poesy, of love, of life,
In the dim water) Sappho. Far above
All these, in thought and fancy,[1] she whose page
The world's last despot seiz'd and trampled on,
Casting her forth where summer's gladden'd sun
Shone o'er the nightless laurel from the Pole.
Before her advent, England's maidens heard
The *Simple Story:* other voices since
Have made their softness sound thro' manly tones
And overpower them. In our days, so sweet,
So potent, so diversified, is none
As thine, Protectress of Aspasia's fame,
Thine, golden shield of matchless Pericles,
Pure heart and lofty soul, Eliza Lynn!

[1] Savary, by order of Bonaparte, seized the whole impression of Madame de Staël's *Germany*, and forced her to take refuge in Sweden.

APPENDIX C

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

TO

ELIZA LYNN WITH THE "FIVE SCENES"

ELOQUENCE often draws the mind awry
By too much tension, then relaxes it
With magic fires round which the Passions stand
Crazed or perverse; but thine invigorates,
By leading from the flutter of the crowd,
And from the flimsy lace and rank perfume
And mirror where all faces are alike,
Up the steep hill where Wisdom, looking stern
To those afar, sits calm, benign; the Gods
But just above, the Graces just below,
Regarding blandly his decorous robe:
There are, my lovely friend, who twitch at thine;
Suffer it; walk straight on; they will have past
Soon out of sight. The powerfullest on earth
Lose all their potency by one assault
On Genius or on Virtue. Where are they
Who pelted Milton? Where are they who raised
Fresh Furies round Rousseau? Where he accurst,
Thrice a deserter, thrice a fugitive,
Always a dastard, who by torchlight shed
A Condé's blood? His march the wolf and bear
Most signalised; he gorged them till they slept,
And howled no longer; men alone howled there,
Under sharp wounds and Famine's sharper fang.
He ridged the frozen flats of Muscovy,
And bridged the rivers, paved the roads with men, . . .
Men in the morning, blocks of ice at noon.
Myriads of these are less than one he threw
To death more lingering in a dungeon's damp,
The sable chief who made his brethren free.

Malevolence in guise of flattery
Will bow before thee. Men I know of old
In whose wry mouths are *friendship*, *truthfulness*,
And *gentleness*, and *geniality*,
And *good old customs*, *sound old hearts*. Beware
Lest they come sideling, lest they slily slip
Some lout before thee whose splay foot impedes
Thy steps, whose shoulder hides thee from thy friends:
Leave such behind; let pity temper scorn.
With this encouragement, with this advice,
Accept my Christmas gift, perhaps my last.
Behold *Five Scenes*, scenes not indeed most fit
For gentle souls to dwell in; but the worst
Lie out of sight, dark cypresses between;
Another dared pass thro' them, I dare not.
Askest thou why none ever could lead forth
My steps upon the stage? . . . I would evoke
Men's meditation, shunning men's applause.
Let this come after me, if come it will;
I shall not wait for it, nor pant for it,
Nor hold my breath to hear it, far or nigh.
Orestes and Electra walkt with me,
And few observ'd them: then Giovanna shedd
Her tears into my bosom, mine alone.
The shambling step in plashy, loose morass,
The froth upon the lip, the slavering tongue,
The husky speech interminable, please
More than the vulgar, tho' the vulgar most.
How little worth is fame when even the wise
Wander so widely in our wildering field!
Easy it were for one in whose domain
Each subject hath his own, and but his own,
Easy it were for him to parcel out
A few more speeches, filling up the chinks;
Difficult, far more difficult, to work
Wards for the lock than hinges for the gate.
I who have skill for wards have also strength
For hinges; nor should they disgrace the door
Of noblest temple Rome or Athens rear'd.
Content am I to go where soon I must;
Another day may see me, now unseen;
I may perhaps rise slowly from my tomb
And take my seat among the living guests.
Meanwhile let some one tell the world thy worth,
One whom the world shall listen to, one great
Above his fellows, nor much lower than thou:
He who can crown stands very near the crown'd.

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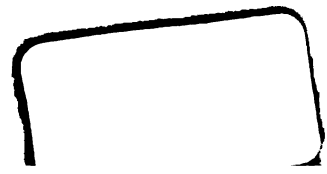
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